



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 31 of 2015

Sitting of 22 September 2015

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - VIP GALLERY – FRENCH SENATORS**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that we have in our VIP Gallery today, two French Senators, Mr Alain Marsaud and Mr Christophe-André Frassa who are on official visit in the context of the official commemoration of the 300 years of the presence of French people in Mauritius. On behalf of the House and in my own name, I extend a warm welcome to them.

PAPERS LAID

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Prime Minister's Office –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Human Rights Commission for the year ended 31 December 2014.

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development -

- (a) The Land (Duties and Taxes) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 175 of 2015).
- (b) The Annual Report of the Accountant General and the Accounts of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2014 (In Original).

C. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 179 of 2015).

D. Ministry of Local Government –

The District Council of Pamplémousses (Market/Fair) Regulations 2015
(Government Notice No. 176 of 2015).

E. Ministry of Arts and Culture –

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Tamil Speaking Union
for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

F. Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation –

- (a) The National Identity Card (Civil Identity Register) Regulation 2015
(Government Notice No. 177 of 2015).
- (b) The National Identity Card (Amendment) Regulation 2015
(Government Notice No. 178 of 2015).

G. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the
Chagossian Welfare Fund for fiscal year 2014.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
CEB – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to -

- (a) regarding the emergency measures recommended by the World Bank to ensure the security of supply thereof, where matters stand as to the –
- (i) appeals of CT Power and of Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor AS and the purchase of engines of 60 MW for the St. Louis Power Station;
 - (ii) optimisation of maintenance;
 - (iii) emergency voltage reduction;
 - (iv) 37-year old Pielstick engines, and
 - (v) purchase of two 36 MW gas turbines, and
- (b) if the price thereof will be lowered, following the windfall gains made by the Central Electricity Board due to the fall in the price of coal and of oil.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, in answer to part (a), the World Bank in its report at page 7 says –

“The results of simulations of the energy supply to peak demand in the island of Mauritius carried out by the World Bank team revealed significant capacity gaps for the period 2015-2017. In the short term - so goes on the World Bank - time constraints would very likely prevent any additions to the generation installed capacity in the island of Mauritius that are not already planned and under development. Therefore, the measures recommended by the World Bank team to eliminate the capacity gap in this horizon refer to enhancing the operation of the existing system, fast tracking generation projects already in the pipeline and extending the operation either of existing generation assets

that are scheduled for decommissioning or of IPPS whose contract is scheduled for termination.”

At page 53 of the report, the World Bank discusses in detail its recommendations for the short-term. Nothing in what they say can authorise any well-intentioned reader to find, emergency drama or panic, when there is none.

It is, therefore, a theatrical exaggeration to suggest that we have to take measures in the nature of an emergency.

On a correct reading of the report in conjunction with facts provided to me, I am of the firm opinion that, in assessing the capacity gap, the World Bank, in fact, underestimated the capacity available for supply, especially during the critical months of November and December.

I shall take one instance which is at page 121 of the report. The World Bank assumes that CEL will continue to run on coal and bagasse but omits from consideration the fact that CEL has been running only on coal and this as from 2014. The World Bank figure is that CEL will churn out only 12 MW. In fact, CEL will continue with coal and will churn out 22 MW of power.

At page 41, I can only read what is written there: Little information is available on the Medine new bagasse-fired thermal plant in the documentation made available to the World Bank team.

In the energy balance in 11, the projects output is considered from 2015 onwards. For this reason, the World Bank team assumes that the Medine new plant is expected to be operational at the beginning of 2015.

We see, therefore, that, far from being dramatic, the language of the World Bank is guarded and cautionary. For example, on Medine New, the World Bank provides the figure of 4 MW when the real figure is 11 MW.

As for the Pielstick engines, they will continue to run until 2017 and not 2016.

All this indicates that, on real figures, we are not in any situation of drama and/or emergency.

What we see, therefore, is that not only has there been an underestimation of available capacity, there has also been a misapprehension of the maintenance plan of CEB. CEB will

be able, with the assistance of the IPPs, to sail through 2016 and through 2017 without great difficulty.

I come now to part (a)(i) of the question on CT Power and BWSC. The two cases are not appeals strictly speaking; they are applications for Judicial Review. CT Power has applied for judicial review. The matter will be mentioned on 24 September 2015.

BWSC has also applied for Judicial Review. They applied for an injunction. The case will be mentioned on 28 September 2015.

In my statement in the National Assembly on 01 September 2015, I informed the House that, on 03 July 2015, the CEB has invited fresh tenders with revised specifications for 60 MW capacity, as approved by the African Development Bank and recommended by the World Bank. The closing date is 01 October 2015. It is expected that the contract will be awarded by the end of this year for commissioning of the engines within 18 months. The engines should be operational by June/July 2017.

Optimisation of Maintenance, that is with regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, the CEB is in consultation with the Independent Power Producers and it has already finalised scheduled maintenance of all generating units island wide with a view to optimise on capacity available and minimise outage on maintenance, that is, machines being immobilised because of maintenance. In terms of figures, the reserve margin - which is a capacity within which we can play if we are in trouble - ranges from 42 MW to a very comfortable 146 MW during the whole year taking into account what is called a spinning reserve of 10%. The reserve margin should, therefore, cater for any major breakdown of the biggest unit in operation. All these calculations have taken into account seasonal variation in demand and seasonal variation in supply.

As regards part (a)(iii), emergency voltage reduction, that is a recommendation of the World Bank. CEB has, in the light of these recommendations, conducted tests. They have given positive results, confirming the forecast of the World Bank, that is, that it is feasible to undergo emergency voltage reduction. What it means is that voltage would be reduced by a certain percentage. Already, in our law under the Electric CT Regulations, CEB or any producer is allowed to reduce voltage by up to 6% - to reduce or to increase by up to 6%. This would mean, according to CEB's estimates, that there would be a capacity reduction of 5 to 8 MW, but I hasten to add that this has not been tested on the terrain, these are estimates.

CEB also states that such reduction will have no effect on domestic and industrial appliances.

CEB does not envisage resorting to this measure except in very, very extreme circumstances.

As regards part (a)(iv), the Pielstick engines were commissioned in 1978 and 1979 respectively. The initial rating was 12MW for each engine; they have been derated to 5 MW only and they are operating safely on this 5 MW output. It is expected that operating these engines for two more years should not be a problem. Upon the commissioning of these new 60 MW units at St Louis in 2017, those units will be phased out.

As regards part (a) (v), the purchase of the two 36 MW Gas Turbines, in my statement of 01 September 2015, Madam Speaker, I mentioned how the World Bank had recommended that gas turbines of 2 x 36 MW should be procured. Such technology should provide lower costs of production of electricity in the medium-term through significant improvement of overall efficiency, which is twofold than the open cycle gas turbines presently in operation at Nicolay. The environmental aspects associated with diesel engines operating on heavy fuel oil will also be considerably improved.

The CEB is in the process of appointing a Consultant for the installation of the gas turbines and a first unit is expected to be in operation in January 2018. The CEB has launched an expression of interest for consultancy services on 25 August 2015. The closing date is 07 October 2015. The scope of the consultancy is to carry out a summary feasibility study to validate the project and to propose technical implementation solutions, carry out environmental impact assessment and risk assessment and the basic design engineering of the power plant.

The CEB expects to appoint the Consultant by mid-October 2015, the report to be submitted by June 2016. In parallel, the Consultant will carry out a pre-qualification of EPC contractors by May 2016 and prepare the tender documents for design, supply and commissioning of the plant. Tenders are expected to be floated in August 2016 and the contract award is expected by January 2017 which means that the first turbine could be in operation in January 2018 and a second one in January 2019 and completed with the steam turbine and full CCGT plant in January 2020.

The Combined Cycle Gas Turbine plant will operate with an efficiency of around 60% as compared to 45% of diesel plant and 30% for coal/bagasse plant.

In parallel, a committee comprising my Ministry, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management, the Mauritius Ports Authority and the State Trading Corporation is working on the aspects regarding the implementation, transport and storage of LNG. This will be the subject of debates in connection with the MARENA Bill. The possibility of bilateral cooperation with countries such as Mozambique and others regarding long-term Government to Government agreement is also being considered.

As regards part (b) the question, I am not aware of the extent of these alleged “windfall gains” as I do not hold the latest accounts of the CEB.

(Interruptions)

However, it is clear that with the drop in commodity prices – I do not read certain newspapers - coupled with the fact that CEB steadfastly refused to be trapped by those who were pressing for the adoption of hedging mechanisms, CEB can easily forecast a year of profits. However, no reduction in tariffs is envisaged.

Compared to other institutions in the country, the Central Electricity Board took the right decision not to resort to hedging at the time that the prices of HFO and coal were increasing on the world market. May I add that I take no credit for this because these were decisions which were taken before my time! This has enabled the Central Electricity Board to benefit from the current drop in oil and coal prices. Such drops may be only temporary as the situation may quickly evolve on the commodities market particularly if oil producing countries reduce their production. Experience shows that oil prices are very volatile subject to geopolitical situations and demand and supply conditions.

Furthermore, as the House is aware, the Central Electricity Board has heavy investment programmes over the next five years to increase its production capacity through the installation of engines at St Louis Power Station and at Les Grandes Salines. In addition, the CEB is upgrading its grid because of the under-investment in that sector in the past. There is a pressing need to upgrade the physical integrity of the Transmission and Distribution network to cope with more adverse climatic conditions as well as to accommodate more renewable energy to meet the target of 35% by 2025. The current figures

of Central Electricity Board show that it will need investments in the order of Rs22 billion in the next five years.

Such investments would increase the debt servicing requirements of the Board and the current positive financial position can only allow the Board to minimise any impact on future electricity tariffs.

Furthermore, the Central Electricity Board tariff is not indexed to inflation and foreign currencies for the payment of its loans. These factors may obviously erode the current surplus.

In addition, according to Central Electricity Board's forecast the price of coal is expected to increase by 3% to 4% annually over the next four years, while the price of oil is forecast to annually increase in the range of 6.7% to 7.5% based on the latest World Bank's Commodity Price Forecast Update. A new salary structure and related conditions of service of Central Electricity Board employees is due as from July 2017. This will further add to the operational costs of the Central Electricity Board.

In light of the above, I repeat that the Central Electricity Board is not envisaging any reduction in tariff and I support fully the stand of the CEB.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has been very slow in delivery, I will, therefore, expect that we have some more time for supplementary questions. Any clear-minded reading of the report picks out emergency measures throughout, the term 'emergency measures' appears time and again. It is clear that for the World Bank we are in an emergency situation. Can I quote, for example, page 57, paragraph 5 where the World Bank report says –

“In fact, even if all the recommendations are implemented, the quantitative simulations indicate that there would still be a relevant capacity gap in 2016 and the first semester of 2017.”

So, it is clear that it is emergency measures that are put forward. Now, it is clear also that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, advised by the CEB, is saying that the World Bank is wrong, has underestimated this and that. Now, can I ask whether a representation has been made to the World Bank by Mauritius, if yes, can we have a copy of that representation, and, if yes, what has been the reaction of the World Bank?

Mr Collendavelloo: Let me take one thing first. Nothing in page 57 warrants creating a panic! Nothing in page 57 warrants that we declare an emergency! On the contrary, of course, we can always extract parts of a report.

The whole of that report shows that we are not in an emergency. Secondly, with regard to what the World Bank figures have given, they, themselves said like I read at page 41 that they have made assumptions - which is perfectly normal for an expert to do on - when they deal with *Medine* New the new bagasse fired thermal plant, it is clear that the experts were basing themselves on the information which they had, but the real information is otherwise, this is all I am saying. We have taken the report, I don't think there is any need for representations; I will take the decision when the decision has to be taken, but for now I've read that 10 times over, I am satisfied that we are not in a panic situation, but we are border line as I have said. We need to take our precautions, although it does not arise directly from the question, but it comes to my mind, we are embarked on an Energy Efficiency STARTER Programme which started with the Energy Efficiency Act, right now, I have asked PNKE to start the programme with CWA. Already, just on CWA, we will be able to save 15% of energy bills.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, we will have to agree to disagree. My reading of the report is totally different and it is clear that the Minister himself disagrees when he says that the World Bank has underestimated this and that and so on. But I'll move on, since we have to agree to disagree. As far as the purchase of those vital 60 megawatts engines at St Louis are concerned, the hon. Minister has informed us that two cases: one from City Power and the other one from BWSC are before the Supreme Court, will be mentioned in both cases in September. Now, we know that time is of the essence, that we are very tight, it will take - I don't think 18 months like the CEB is saying - I think two years for the order to be placed, the engines to be constructed, shipped to Mauritius, commissioned and installed, commissioned and so on. But even on 18 months, will the hon. Minister agree with me, this is very tight? Is he sure that those cases will be over by the end of the year or is he envisaging to go ahead and place the order for purchase even if there are cases before the Supreme Court?

Mr Collendavelloo: I will see when the orders are open. I must say that I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this is one of the way forward. It is true that we cannot be held to ransom by a Supreme Court case, but at the same time, we need to respect the

Judiciary. We have to balance these two matters. The Public Procurement Act allows me to use certain powers, up to now I have been very careful not to make use of it, although I have been very tempted to do this. The BWSC (Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor) - I am sorry I can't pronounce the real name - in fact, is very keen with the second tender. It has made about 50 demands of clarifications. So, in the same time, they are saying to cancel the tender the first month and at the same breath they are saying they want to be interested in the second tender. I don't want to pass comment because the case is in Court.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, if I can move to the other points which I have raised because we see the risk, we are going to be *sur la corde raide* and I hope *la corde ne cède pas* between now and the first six months of 2017. Now, if I can ask the next question - optimisation of maintenance. We've been in this Assembly for the last year, then every year, every time I put a question, hon. Beebeejaun then Minister responsible would say: "we are improving, we are fine-tuning and so on". What is left to be fine-tuned? Can I have an estimate of what the fine-tuning by CEB at this late hour is going to bring us of more *marge de manoeuvre*?

Mr Collendavelloo: It is not annual fine-tuning. I have looked at the maintenance plan although I don't understand much about it, but I mean it is not too difficult either. There is a plan where you have lots of colours telling you month by month which machine is going to go on maintenance and then I have read that for November and December there are 40.7 megawatts of power which will be available for maintenance because there will be no maintenance at that time. This is what they tell me, their plan seems attractive and they tell me with this maintenance plan they can cater for breakdowns etcetera. *L'avenir nous le dira.*

Mr Bérenger: I have looked at the figures which the hon. Minister has just provided us for that is described as an emergency measure, this so-called 'Emergency Voltage Reduction'. Now, I've listened to the Minister and the figures that he has provided us, that we are going to be able to bring down peak demand by 5 to 8 megawatt which is legally admissible. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that this should be the very last resort, that this is going to disturb the whole set up?

Mr Collendavelloo: I do. I mean by that, I agree.

Mr Bérenger: If I can move on the Pielstick engines. Really, I find that the Minister takes it *très à la légère*. These are 37 year-old engines that can explode at any time - I am not

being alarmist - there have been accidents in the recent past. It is polluting the environment there, you have protest and the World Bank points out that we will no longer have spare parts for these 37 year-old engines and therefore is the hon. Minister telling me that he can live, he is happy, with that really emergency situation? It is described by the World Bank that if nothing else can be done, then these 37 year-old engines will be used with all the risks that it entails.

Mr Collendavelloo: I have not started living in a dream world. The reality is there. For 35 years, there have been these two Pielstick engines, it is not my habit to dig in the past, but no one has been very worried about it until now. I am getting worried.

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course! I am not saying anything against you! I am talking of...

(Interruptions)

You want me to dig in the past, that is your problem!

(Interruptions)

In the past I would be – this is why I say I don't want to dig in the past, but we raised the alarm when we were together, we know this. But there was some complacency on the other side. I don't know why this - I saw that mini minor on the paper *Le Mauricien* with Lady Jugnauth saying that was the first car she drove. This is the attachment we have with old engines. We've got to understand what we are talking about. When we talk of the Pielstick engines running, we are talking only about three hours daily during peak hours. We are not talking of Pielstick engines running all the time. We are not that dependent on them, but at night, for instance, it is 200 megawatts. We don't need them, but when it comes to 492 on peak demand then, of course, you put in the additional power. I hope that clarifies the matter.

Mr Bérenger: If I can move on because the hon. Minister is taking a lot of time instead of replying to questions. On the issue of the two new turbines, gas turbine, to be operated for a few years on light diesel oil and then to move on LNG, if we do import LNG. Figures have been quoted by the Head of the CEB that it will cost us Rs5.50 *ou* Rs5.70, without telling us if that is long-term with LNG or only with light diesel oil. Can we have precision on that?

Mr Collendavello: Well, I hope I will start replying to your questions since you seem to be unhappy with my attitude.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, please! Address the Chair!

Mr Collendavello: The combined cycle gas turbines will run on diesel oil. I have the figures; they have just been given to me. In combined cycle, the cost of production will be less than Rs6 per kilowatt hour.

(Interruptions)

That's on combined.

(Interruptions)

Yes, with the light diesel oil. Wait a minute, don't be impatient.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to reply, please!

Mr Collendavello: Madam Speaker, will give you time.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I know it is combined cycle gas. Your question is: what will happen when LNG steps in?

Mr Bérenger: No, my question is: with light diesel oil, what will it cost?

Mr Collendavello: Rs6 ! Light diesel oil...

Mr Bérenger: This is with combined cycle!

Mr Collendavello: No, no!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to reply. Do you have the reply, hon. Vice-Prime Minister?

Mr Collendavello: Combined cycle will run on diesel. Combined cycle will not run with gas, will not run with kerosene.

Mr Bérenger: Can I remind the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, therefore, that we have set up, we are going to have a feasibility study if it is possible to have the combined cycle. Now, we are setting up a feasibility study to look whether it will be feasible to import LNG. Isn't that putting *la charrette loin devant les bœufs*? We are going for LNG, we are going for the combined cycle and, at the same time, going with feasibility studies!

Mr Collendavelloo: We are not at LNG. We are not at LNG yet. We need to know, to do all the feasibility studies before we can reach there. For the moment, we have already launched ourselves on the combined cycle which will run on diesel, and you may be of a different opinion, but, for the moment, I am taking the decision on advice which I received, and on the advice that I have received, not only from CEB, and on that it is erroneous to assume that my advice is from CEB. I have independent Advisers and sometimes they coincide and sometimes they do not coincide, and from what they tell me, the combined cycle will start working with diesel oil and then we will see what happens with LNG; because, it can be hoped.

Mr Bérenger: I still have not been provided with the figure. With light diesel oil, without the combined cycle, what will it cost us?

Mr Collendavelloo: We don't know. Because we need to do the feasibility study before I adventure myself in figures.

Mr Bérenger: This morning, Madam Speaker, the Head of the CEB made a statement. I wanted to ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he confirms that, that we are bound by international conventions not to import - what was stated this morning, a *convention internationale signée par le gouvernement* - more than the 750,000 tonnes that we import as at present. Now, I want to know, has Mauritius signed, ratified any international convention that says that?

Mr Collendavelloo: I am not aware of that statement, but the true position is that in the forthcoming COP21 there will be attempts to impose upon us, but there is no convention which limits the imports of coal for the moment.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: A good thing, because it seems that the CEB has forgotten – I don't know if the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is still standing – that CEB had given its green light to

CT Power, and that would have meant 500,000 additional coal to be imported, and now the Head of the CEB makes such statement *à la place du ministre, je dois dire*. But, I am satisfied that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, at least, is not aware of any convention that we have signed.

Mr Collendavelloo: No, I am not saying I am not aware. There is none. There is no such convention. Unless otherwise advised.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Bérenger: A last part of my question and then ...

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr Bérenger: On the cost. I am surprised that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is saying that he is not aware; he has not had the final accounts of the CEB and so on. I am sure he is aware of the Central Electricity Board official report for the first five months of the year, and if I can quote -

“The CEB budgeted a profit of Rs264 m. for the first five months, ending 31 May, but the actual profit for the first five months are now to be Rs1,594,000,000.”

This represents a favourable variance of Rs1,330,000,000, the windfall gains of the five months.

Now, if you project that over the 12 months, and is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that only last week the latest order placed for purchase of coal was at 50 Dollars? The former purchase was 60 Dollars. Last week, the order for purchase has been put at 50 Dollars. Therefore, the windfall gains have already been made and the accounts are in front of the - or it should be - hon. Vice-Prime Minister, and it is easy to calculate that the windfall gains would be more than Rs3 billion for the whole year.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Collendavelloo: This is only one of the reasons why I am a happy man.

(Interruptions)

But, on the report, I do not have it. I have asked the Chairman of the Board.

(Interruptions)

I will! The first thing I do when I buy 'Weekend' is to read the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his press conference.

Madam Speaker: Please, come back to the question!

Mr Collendavelloo: Let me say, I am explaining how I came to know of the existence of this management account. I have asked the Chairman, it has not yet come up to the Board, and when it comes, I will look at it and then I will see. The Chairman is the person, because he chairs the Finance Committee, he should be the one to be available. So, I am...

(Interruptions)

I am not going into this. I follow sound principles of good governance.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In reply to my Parliamentary Question No. B/457 of two weeks ago, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister replied that the highest price at which we ever purchased coal was 141 Dollars, and now we hear it is 50 Dollars, latest consignment. And we hear also this morning that the forecast increase in price of coal by the CEB is 4% to 5%. That will take at least 20 to 25 years for the price of coal to become its original highest. Does that not provide enough leeway to the CEB and to the Government to be more compassionate to the people who are at the lower rungs of the ladder and to our manufacturing sector which is having difficult times competing with countries like China and Bangladesh and so on and so forth?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, that's a good one - at last! - because I was expecting that for a long time. Why, because hon. Ganoo was the first one to suggest this in one of his press conferences! Yes! What can be done is for the lower rungs of the ladder to benefit from a restructuring of the tariffs so that they don't pay that much and they benefit from the gains to be obtained. The suggestion from hon. Mahomed is extremely valid and it follows from what hon. Ganoo has suggested. Let us look at the lower rungs, see whether the other consumers

can pay for those who are downtrodden. Now, for manufacturing sectors, I don't think we can do this.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to part (b) of the PNQ, can I ask whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is aware that during the course of the press conference of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on Saturday, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was quite enthusiastically referring to the final accounts and actually distributed the final accounts during the press conference...

(Interruptions)

The management account! I am sorry, if I got it wrong. The management account and that if in the light of the answer given by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that he is not aware of the content of the report, whether there has been a breach of confidentiality and whether...

(Interruptions)

...and whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will initiate....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Allow the hon. Member to finish! Allow the hon. Member to finish!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order, Please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said! I have given already additional time for this PNQ. I don't want us to lose the time of the House, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Perhaps the hon. Members on the Opposition side can extend the courtesy of listening!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't make remarks! Please, ask your question!

Mr Rutnah: Will the Vice-Prime Minister order an inquiry - and I anticipate....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, don't anticipate anything! Ask your question, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will reply!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: The question is whether there has been a leakage and whether there will be inquiry and whether during the course of the inquiry the hon. Leader of the Opposition will assist as to how he received the copy of the report.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah! Hon. Rutnah, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please behave!

(Interruptions)

Yes, allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

And then the last question will be for the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: If hon. Baloomoody will let me....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, don't use this kind of words in the Parliament!

(Interruptions)

You have finished!

Mr Collendavelloo: I have not even seen the document which was distributed to the press, for one. I am not even aware of the origin and provenance of that obscure document.

(Interruptions)

This document has not even reached the Finance Committee of the Board.

(Interruptions)

Now, whether...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, please! I have asked you to behave!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: On a point of order...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: On a point of order, yes!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: The hon. Member has just made a very serious allegation that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been involved in a serious crime of bribery. He said that he paid bribery

(Interruptions)

May I ask him to come and withdraw immediately....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, did you say this?

(Interruptions)

Did you say this? If you did, please say 'yes' and withdraw!

Mr Rutnah: I never from a standing position made any allegation.

(Interruptions)

And I have not said it and I refuse to withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No. Hon. Rutnah! Hon. Rutnah, please!

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Can I have some order, otherwise I will suspend the session?

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister, please, sit down! The floor is for the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

Mr Collendavelloo: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Let me - don't spoil my day!

(Interruptions)

For unparliamentary language, the Standing Orders say: it is only when the Speaker has heard the word.

(Interruptions)

Read your Standing Orders! Go and read your Standing Orders, then come back!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: If you haven't heard...

Madam Speaker: Please, sit down! I will listen, if there is need, to the recording, whether in the recording there are such words which have been used. I have asked the hon. Member to say whether he has used these words and I haven't as yet received his reply.

Mr Collendavelloo: May I reply to the question, Madam Speaker. I am not aware of the origin, provenance of that document. I cannot, therefore, even say if there has been a leakage. The leakage is a leakage of an authentic document. For all I know, it could have been written by anyone in the world. Now, come and satisfy me that this is the original document and I will answer readily!

Madam Speaker: Last question is for the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: Before I ask the question, can I table a copy of the report dated 30 July....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Bhagwan, please, allow the hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask his last question! We are ahead of time!

Mr Bérenger: And the title is 'Management Accounts for the period January-May 2015 and Revised Forecast for the year 2015'. I table a copy. You give me back my copy, please!

My last question is - I hope the CEB is right. We all hope, but can I remind the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, *il prend de lourdes responsabilités*. We have had precedence. The CEB has been badly wrong in the past. In 1976-1977, we had rolling blackouts. We had to purchase a very expensive gas turbine in emergency situations that we all remember. Therefore, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister giving the guarantee to the country that there will not be a repeat of these periods?

Mr Collendavelloo: The country will not wake up with any blackout if I am in charge and I am going to be in charge. If I can see the report, please! I would like to see that. I have never seen that report. I don't know where it comes from. Of course, it will be unsigned. You can't expect it to bear a signature.

(Interruptions)

So, until such time ...

(Interruptions)

...when I obtain the correct copy, then I will...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you have got a question! No, not from a sitting position, please!

Mr Collendavelloo: So, when I obtain what I have said...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: ...then I will be able to comment. For the moment, this has no value for me.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that P.Q. No. B/523 has been withdrawn. P.Q. No. B/521 in regard to the proposed setting-up of a Land Tribunal and addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by the hon. Attorney-General. P.Q. Nos. B/527 and B/528 have also been withdrawn. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SMF QUARTERS – RELOCATION

(No. B/519) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Special Mobile Force quarters in Vacoas/Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the relocation thereof is being envisaged to allow for the development of the prime land on which the said quarters stand.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it is not presently envisaged to relocate any of the Special Mobile Force (SMF) quarters situated in the region of Vacoas/Phoenix, to allow for other development of the land on which stand these quarters.

However, out of the 180 SMF quarters, 39 which are situated at Abercromby, Vacoas, are vacant and in a very bad state. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport has recommended that these quarters be pulled down.

The land, on which these 39 quarters stand, has been earmarked for the construction of a swimming pool, a modern gymnasium and allied facilities for the Mauritius Police Force. As a matter of fact, provision for these projects has already been made in the Public Sector Investment Programme 2015/2016.

SLAVES & INDENTURED LABOURERS – LAND RESTITUTION RIGHTS BILL

(No. B/520) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the descendants of slaves and of indentured labourers in Mauritius, he will state if Government proposes to introduce a Land Restitution Rights Bill in order to bring justice thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: In fact, Madam Speaker, I'll be replying, with your permission, to both P.Q. Nos. B/520 and B/521 as they relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker, the Truth and Justice Commission has, in its report, recommended the setting up of a Land Research and Monitoring Unit to carry out research into cases of dispossession of land and cater for the obstacles to recovering same.

Madam Speaker, Cabinet has, at its meeting of 06 February 2015, agreed to the setting-up of a Ministerial Committee under my Chairmanship to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Ministerial Committee had, at its meeting on 06 August 2015, taken cognizance of the Interim Report of the Land Research and Mediation Commission submitted, in April 2015, by Mr Mandary on the 224 cases of dispossession of land as highlighted in the Truth and Justice Commission Report.

The Interim Report mentioned that there are 42 cases, that is, 27 in Mauritius and 15 in Rodrigues, where there are sufficient evidence of land dispossession. In 91 cases, there is

no evidence of dispossession. The remaining cases require further investigation by the Land Research and Mediation Commission.

There is, also, an additional 131 cases, that is, 121 in Mauritius and 10 in Rodrigues, which have not been investigated by the defunct Truth and Justice Commission on account of late submission of requests, and which should be looked into by the Land Research and Mediation Unit.

The Ministerial Committee has also recommended that the 42 cases of alleged dispossession identified in the Mandary Report be submitted to the Attorney-General's Office for advice on the way forward.

I am informed that, upon receipt of the Report on 07 August 2015, the Solicitor-General has designated two law officers to study same and tender legal advice.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that many of the cases of alleged dispossession of land date back to more than 100 years and, in many cases, legal challenge to the title of the current owners, whether acquired by prescription or by other means may be difficult. Legal advice on these and other issues will be sought prior to a policy decision being taken on the way forward. Moreover, it could be a lengthy and complicated process to trace out all the heirs.

The House will note that the Ministerial Committee has recommended the setting up of a Land Research and Mediation Unit as opposed to the Land Research and Monitoring Unit recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission. This Unit will be headed by Mr Mandary and will comprise of a land surveyor from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, a retired officer of the Registrar-General and an Attorney, under contract. This Unit would be called upon to carry out in-depth investigations into complaints to advise the applicants after investigation.

The Committee considers that it would be advisable that the Land Research and Mediation Unit, in the first instance, attempts to resolve the dispute through mediation.

A Land Restitution Bill would, in the circumstances, entail various legal and constitutional implications which have to be carefully looked into. It could, also, entail major financial implications for the State if the approach to be taken in matters of responsibility for restitution follows, for instance, the South African model.

Madam Speaker, in regard to the setting-up of a Land Division at the Supreme Court, consultations were held with the former Chief Justice who expressed the view that he was not in favour of creating such a Division. On 17 September 2015, the Master and Registrar has

been consulted anew on the setting-up of a Land Division of the Supreme Court. Whilst the Judiciary is currently not contemplating the setting up of a Land Division, it would welcome the setting-up of a dedicated Land Tribunal dealing with land disputes and which would also deal with cases of compulsory acquisition of land by Government in order to avoid the clogging of courts.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Ag. Prime Minister, in his reply, stated that the Ministerial Committee had recommended the reconstitution of a Land Research and Mediation Commission, but, in a reply in this House last week, the Prime Minister stated that the Ministerial Committee has recommended the reconstitution of the Land Research and Monitoring Unit and later, in that same reply, it is stated that there are 87 cases which should be followed by the Land Research and Mediation Unit. May we know what is the exact decision that has been taken by the Ministerial Committee?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes. The exact title of the Unit, Madam Speaker, is Land, Research and Mediation Unit. The report of the Truth and Justice Commission mentions a Land, Research and Monitoring Unit, but it is just a question of change of name, because there is obviously the possibility, especially with these 42 cases of what has been identified as dispossession of taking this to Court, but, in all likelihood, this could be a difficult venture given the time that has occurred, given the issue of tracing back all the heirs on both sides of the court case and given also that prescription has occurred, etc. and the 30 years have gone by. So, in fact, in a first instance, the Committee feels that let us try and do some mediation, let us try and get people to voluntarily compensate or restitute/restore the land and if that is not possible also at the same time, as I mentioned, the report has gone to the Solicitor-General to advise on legal action. So, the two paths are being followed.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, whether the whole problem about this question of dispossession and restitution of land finally boils down to a question of finance and money, the monetary resources available to the claimants, especially in view of the executive summary of the Truth and Justice Commission said, and I quote –

“There is no justice in Mauritius for those who cannot afford lawyers, notaries, land surveyors and attorneys. The Commission’s request for funds already earmarked since 2009 to help a few deponents survey their land was turned down by the authorities.”

So, can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to see to it, whatever new set-up is now being envisaged, the Mediation Unit replacing the other Unit which was decided upon in the past that the authorities/Government see to it that all the resources should be made available to the claimants?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam, I think all of us who deal with the public know how complex these cases are, because they date from a long time, it is a lot of complex issues. So, Government, in fact, is going the extra mile. We are appointing and paying a full-time retired Chief Surveyor now to come and work on this issue. There will be also a retired person from the Registrar General's Department, an Attorney on contract. So, money is being put to provide legal and other expertise in all these cases. Obviously, this is all free-of-charge to the persons and, in addition, Madam Speaker, the Solicitor-General has put these two law officers at the disposal of the Unit. So, it is a question of money, it is a question of complexity, but it is also a legal issue, because of the time that these dispossessions have occurred so long ago. So, we are putting the resources, financial and humane behind this structure and this is the first time that this is being done on that scale.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I understand from the Ag. Prime Minister that there are 42 cases where there is sufficient evidence of land dispossession. Madam Speaker, we have wasted a lot of time. We have raised expectation. The Ag. Prime Minister himself chaired a committee to look into these issues. Today, those families are in a very desperate situation.

Madam Speaker: Please ask your question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister what guarantee do we have now that these 42 cases will be looked into immediately because those families are waiting, Madam Speaker?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there are lawyers also on the other side; they can put their time at the disposal of these people also to take this to Court!

(Interruptions)

On the other side, Madam Speaker, we have not wasted any time at all because we have to realise, Madam Speaker, that the Committee, headed by Mr Mandaree, had to look into 224

cases and another 131 cases that have come up after. There are lots of cases and he only submitted his report in April and in August the report was dealt with and sent to the Solicitor-General for advice and we are now reconstituting the whole committee. So, no time has been wasted. If the hon. Member has any time, he can, please, put himself at the disposition of these people and help them!

LAND TRIBUNAL - SETTING UP

(No. B/521) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a land tribunal to expedite matters of land disputes, he will state where matters stand, especially having regard to the alleged numerous cases of misappropriation of land by the sugar estates.

(Vide reply to P.Q. No. B/520)

Madam Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

But you have got another question on the same issue, hon. Lesjongard. It is P.Q. No. B/522, please!

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION – RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/522) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will state if he is aware of the request made by the *Association Justice et Vérité* to delegate the responsibility of the dossier concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission to another Minister and, if so, indicate the actions he proposes to take, if any, in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, a request has, in fact, been received from the *Association Justice et Vérité*. The request will not be acceded to.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the letter that was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister and referred to him whereby it is stated and I quote, if I may be allowed Madam Speaker, -

“Vu que M. Duval est très occupé, nous vous supplions de confier la responsabilité de cette tâche à quelqu’un de la trempe de M. Soodhun...”

(Interruptions)

...qui nous a impressionné par son courage, sa détermination et sa vitesse d’exécution...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Lesjongard: ... à aller jusqu’au bout.”

(Interruptions)

Mais oui !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please, hon. Henry!

Mr Lesjongard: *Eta ale guetter ki famille ki pe roder do couillon, amerde dimoune!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please withdraw this! Because you have used an unparliamentary word, please withdraw!

Mr Lesjongard: I withdraw, but the hon. Member should not make comment from a sitting position, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes!

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the question is very specific and I have responded to it.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: The Ag. Prime Minister says he has responded. May I know whether he has written to those people who have written the letter to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have responded to the question, Madam.

(Interruptions)

INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION – SETTING UP

(No. B/523) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Independent Police Complaints Commission, as mentioned in the Presidential Address, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – LEGISLATION - AMENDMENT

(No. B/524) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Human Rights Commission, he will state if consideration will be given for the law in relation thereto to be amended to increase the powers thereof to investigate into alleged cases of miscarriage of justice.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

POLICE– BARRISTERS - SERVICES

(No. B/525) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the barristers of the private practice whose services have been retained by the Police Department, since January 2015 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the names thereof, indicating in each case the -

(a) mode of selection thereof and the criteria used therefor;

(b) terms and conditions of retention of services thereof, and

(c) cases in respect of which the services thereof have been retained.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to barristers of the private practice whose services have been retained by the Police Department, since January 2015, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police have solicited the services of private barristers on only one occasion, namely in the second leg in the matter S.B., against the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

I am further informed that the Police usually enlist the services of State Counsels for legal advice and to represent the Commissioner of Police in matters before Courts. In the first leg of the matter mentioned earlier, the Assistant Solicitor General and the Assistant Parliamentary Counsel from the Attorney General's Office represented the Commissioner of Police before the Supreme Court.

However, in the second leg of the matter regarding the application made by the Commissioner of Police for an Order to review the injunction granted by Justice Mrs Ah Foon Chui Yew Cheong in the same matter, subsequent to a meeting with the Solicitor General and officers of the State Law Office, the Police exceptionally decided that they would retain Counsel from private practice. Accordingly, when the matter was called before the Judge on 17 July 2015, Counsel Mr S.K.T. instructed by Attorney Mr P.C., after the motion for withdrawal by the State Law Office was granted, appeared for the Police.

Madam Speaker, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the services of Messrs S.K.T. and P.C. were enlisted on the grounds of their track record and experience. They have offered their services on similar terms and conditions as for their other private clients.

No fees have been paid as at date.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister what criteria has been used by the Commissioner of Police to retain the services of Counsel and Attorney in this case?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, it is stated here that it was on the grounds of their track record and excellent experience.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to enquire from the Commissioner of Police or the relevant authorities whether these barristers or attorneys, who have been chosen by the Police, have themselves very bad Police records and let the House know accordingly?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not at all aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Maybe the hon. Ag. Prime Minister may ask the Commissioner of Police whether for this attorney P.C. in particular there was not a Police case which was withdrawn only after this Government took office? There was a Police case before the Court and that was withdrawn.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, but I am sure, Madam Speaker, if the Commissioner of Police was aware of anything adverse he would not have chosen those persons.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The Ag. Prime Minister just said because of the track record. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the services of a Senior Counsel was sought in this particular case especially to assist our Police Force?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he could enquire and inform the House as to whether the services of these Barristers were directives coming from the Prime Minister's Office, through the Secretary for Home Affairs?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware at all about that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The practice of seeking legal advice from outside the State Law Office; does the hon. Ag. Prime Minister not feel that this will undermine legal officers that we have at the State Law Office?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, it is for the exceptional situation in a case which involved two divisions of the Attorney General's Office. Therefore, this is why this exceptional step was taken. So, it is exceptional and that is why it was taken.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramful!

MAHEBOURG & PLAINE MAGNIEN – PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/526) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state the future projects earmarked for implementation thereat.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am tabling a list of future projects for Constituency No 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, which has been approved for implementation by the National Development Unit during Financial Year 2015-2016.

In addition to these, new projects will also be considered under the forthcoming Framework Agreement for the construction and upgrading of roads and associated works.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May I request the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to consider the possibility of making provision for the dredging of the river which flows in the village of Mare Tabac because this has been the serious cause of flooding recently?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will pass it on to the NDU.

POLICE STATIONS, DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS & DETENTION CENTRES – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/527) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed construction of

Police Stations, Divisional Headquarters and Detention Centres, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list thereof, indicating where matters stand in each case, including –

(a) the cost of the project, indicating the amount of money budgeted therefor and the amount thereof already spent in relation thereto, and

(b) when construction works are expected to start.

(Withdrawn)

NDU & CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX - VACANCIES

(No. B/528) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the vacancies which presently exist at the National Development Unit, including the Citizens Advice Bureaux, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case -

(a) the grade thereof;

(b) since when, and

(c) when they will be filled.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/532, B/541, B/564, B/565 and B/546 have been withdrawn.

Parliamentary Question No. B/533 in regard to the Fishing Port/Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Ag. Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and External Communications.

With regard to the Fishing Port, Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Ag. Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and External Communications. PQ No. B/539 in regard to the number of patients suffering from autism will be replied by the hon. Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity.

SPORTS ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL - SETTING UP

(No. B/529) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if a Sports Arbitration Tribunal has been set up and, if so, when and if not, why not.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that the Sports Arbitration Tribunal has been set up since November 2014. I am circulating the composition of the Tribunal which was constituted as required under Section 41 of the Sports Act 2013.

I am also circulating a copy of a “*Press Communiqué*” which was issued following the setting up of the Tribunal inviting stakeholders and members of the public who feel aggrieved by the decision of any sports organisation to make representations to the Tribunal.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, malgré le fait que le ministre vient de nous dire qu’il va circuler la composition du tribunal, peut-il informer la Chambre qui est le *Chairperson* et qui sont les assesseurs ?

Mr Sawmynaden: As I have said the Tribunal was set up in November 2014, the Chairperson is Mr Raj Seebaluck, Magistrate at the Intermediate Court, designated by the Chief Justice, Mr Mahendur Purbhoo a retired Senior Sports Officer and Mr Louis Clency Lee Khun Sing Sam-Soon, Barrister at Law.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir depuis la mise sur pied de ce tribunal, combien de cas ont été référés et peut-on savoir lesquels?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, no case has been referred to and, as I have said, there was a *press communiqué* and no one did come with any case.

10TH EDITION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS GAMES

(No. B/530) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Jeux des Iles de l’Océan Indien*, he will state if Mauritius still stands as candidate for the organisation of the 2019 edition thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that according to the Charter of the Indian Ocean Island Games, the country to host the following edition of the

games is designated six years prior to the holding of the games so that the flag of the games is handed over to the next organising country at the closing ceremony of the current edition.

The decision to entrust the organisation of the 2019 games was, therefore, taken in a meeting of the “*Conseil International des Jeux*” (CIJ) held in Seychelles in February 2012. However, at the CIJ meeting held in April 2015 in Reunion Island, Comoros did not submit the required documents regarding its capacity to organise the 2019 games. CIJ expressed its concern to that situation at the meeting and invited another member country to consider hosting the games. Consequently, Mauritius bid to host the 10th Edition of the Indian Ocean Islands Games in 2019. Mauritius officially submitted its bids documents to the CIJ Secretariat within the prescribed delay.

During meetings held in August 2015 in Reunion Island, *CIJ* finally decided to entrust the hosting of the 2019 Games to Comoros Islands despite the issues raised by my officers regarding *les Village des Jeux*, the medical facilities available and availability of sports infrastructures. At the closing ceremony of the Games in Reunion Island, the flag of the Games was officially handed over to Comoros Island. Therefore, the candidature of Mauritius no longer holds good and is automatically lapsed.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, malgré la réponse du ministre, j’aimerais qu’il nous dise si le représentant de Maurice, au sein du CIJ, a retiré la candidature mauricienne lors de la réunion du 08 Aout de cette année à l’île de la Réunion?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, when the CIJ Committee, the majority of the votes voted for Comoros Island, that means that the candidature of Mauritius is out. So, it is clear.

Mr Quirin: Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, d’être en désaccord avec le ministre car nous pouvons revenir en arrière. Après les jeux de 1998 à la Réunion, on avait confié l’organisation aux Comores, mais vu l’impossibilité des Comores d’aller de l’avant, on avait confié l’organisation à Maurice. Donc, le fait de maintenir la candidature - parce que nous savons très bien comment cela se passe - j’ai avec moi Madame la présidente...

Madam Speaker: Yes, ask your question please!

Mr Quirin: C’est important, il faut que je dise ce que j’ai à dire. J’ai une copie de ...

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member should ask his question, he should be brief.

Mr Quirin: J'ai un article dans un journal en ligne, Madame la présidente, où le responsable du comité olympique des Comores, lui-même, est dans l'attente d'une réponse de son gouvernement pour débloquer les fonds de façon à procéder à construire les nouvelles installations sportives. Ce qui fait qu'il y aura une réunion du CIJ, donc je demande au ministre le fait d'avoir retiré la candidature de Maurice, est-ce que cela ne va pas nous empêcher d'être candidat au cas où les Comores n'arrivent pas à aller de l'avant avec l'organisation pour les Jeux 2019 ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, it is clear, the *CIJ* is the one who decides, who organises the game. The majority of the members of the *CIJ* have decided to give the games to Comoros despite they know that they don't have the infrastructure. They are the ones who take the decision, let them assume their responsibility. We are not the spare wheel. So, we have bid to organise the game, we have the structure, if they don't want to give it to us what can we do!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, Maurice a retiré sa candidature. La candidature n'est pas tombée par elle-même. Si on consulte le procès-verbal de la réunion du CIJ en date du 08 août ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, please! The hon. Minister has already replied to this question, you can't insist on this. Please, proceed with the next question!

TABLE TENNIS - ADVISER/COACH - CONTRACT

(No. B/531) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr G. D., Adviser Coach of table tennis, he will state the reasons why his contract of employment has not been renewed.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, Mr G. D. was employed as Adviser/Coach (Table Tennis) by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on a yearly renewable contract with effect as from August 2003.

At the expiry of the contract of employment of Mr Denis on 31 December 2014, the Ministry decided to retain his services on a month to month basis, as it was the case for the other Advisers/Coaches in order to assess their performance during the tenure of office.

I have to inform the House that I was surprised to learn that Mr Denis, despite being employed as Adviser/Coach in Table Tennis, was working at Harry Latour Stadium and Pte

Jérôme Residential Youth Centre where he had not been performing the duties for which his services had been hired.

Consequently, a decision was taken to terminate his employment with effect from 28 February 2015. Mr Denis was given one month's notice prior to the termination of his contract as per the terms and conditions of the contract.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire pendant combien de temps Monsieur Denis a été au service du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, actually it is in my reply, since August 2003 and until February.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, Monsieur Denis a été quelqu'un qui a été assidu à son travail. Il s'est occupé du centre d'entraînement à Rose Belle, du centre d'entraînement à Pte Jérôme, il s'est aussi occupé à promouvoir le tennis de table dans les écoles. Ceci dit, Madame la présidente, je demanderai au ministre si ce n'est pas surprenant que quelqu'un qui a été régulièrement à son travail pendant 12 années, faisant la promotion du tennis de table et que, subitement, dès que le ministre entre en fonction, un mois après on ne renouvelle pas le contrat de Monsieur Denis, on le licencie. J'aimerais que le ministre nous dise quelle est la vraie raison derrière le non-renouvellement du contrat de Monsieur Denis?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, he was under contract and it was on a month to month basis. Furthermore, he was employed as an adviser/coach for table tennis and what was he doing at Pointe Jérôme Residential Youth Centre where we don't even have a tennis table!

CASINOS DE MAURICE - FINANCE, STAFF & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

(No. B/532) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the casinos, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Casinos de Maurice, information as to the financial, staffing and industrial relations situations thereof, indicating if –

(a) losses are being incurred thereat;

(b) they are overstaffed;

- (c) a mutually agreed retirement scheme and a 14th Month Bonus Scheme for the employees thereof are implemented thereat;
- (d) there are arrears disputes thereat, and
- (e) where matters stand concerning the Grand' Baie and Flic-en-Flac casinos and an eventual strategic partner therefor.

(Withdrawn)

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT/FISH PROCESSING PROJECT

(No. B/533) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Fishing Port/Fish Processing Project at Bain des Dames, he will give the details of the -

- (a) Chinese investment, and
- (b) project thereof, indicating -
 - (i) who will finance the quays and other infrastructure in relation thereto;
 - (ii) the fish species concerned therewith;
 - (iii) if all permits required therefor have been sought and obtained, and
 - (iv) the start and completion dates thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. During my official mission to China, in June 2013, I met the Chairperson of the LHF Group of Companies and invited them to invest in the port sector in Mauritius. The LHF Group of Companies which are based in China are internationally renowned in the fishing and seafood sectors. The development of the ocean economy will need the emergence of a dynamic port to attract investment.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Ports Authority that on 17 August 2015, the company LHF Marine Development Ltd, a subsidiary of LHF Group of Companies, has submitted an application for land in the port for the setting up of a fishing port and other ancillary facilities. The proposed development will be implemented in two phases. The first phase includes the construction of

quays and cold storage facilities at an estimated cost of USD 100 million. The second phase comprises the construction of a trade centre, a seafood market and a floating restaurant. The estimated cost is USD 400 million.

The Quay proposed under LHF Marine Project will include a total length of 650 metres together with an access of 350 metres.

The promoter will meet the cost for the proposed development.

Madam Speaker, the fish species concerned are tuna (skipjack, yellow fin, big eye tuna) and allied species (dorado and wahoo).

However, the project being at the initial stage, the promoter is now carrying out the full feasibility study and detailed project plan to be in a position to apply for all relevant permits, namely:

- EIA licence,
- Building and land use permit
- Port licence
- Health, sanitary licence
- Safety and security clearances

The Mauritius Ports Authority has issued a letter of intent to the Company for a plot of land of 4.5 hectares to enable them to work on the feasibility study, detailed project plans and seek the necessary clearances. Depending on the receipt of all necessary permits, the first phase of the project is expected to start in the second quarter of 2016.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether during the course of the discussion, a social component with regard to the inhabitants of the region has been discussed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I know, Madam Speaker, that a social component, including particularly the fishermen of the region is being discussed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister - I missed it, if he answered - who will finance the quays and other infrastructure?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The whole cost of the project is being financed by the promoter.

Mr Baloomoody: The Ag. Prime Minister just mentioned that there is consultation with the fishermen in the region. May I know the last time they met and what have been proposed to those fishermen?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I did not say there were consultations. I said that during the discussions with the promoters there is a social plan which is being considered for the fishermen of the region. Now, we are not yet at a stage where, in fact, development is about to start. We are still at the initial stage and it will be premature to start negotiations before the whole project is firmed up.

Mr Baloomoody: Exactly, this is why! Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that, whilst talking about compensation to the fishermen, we have given them the false hope that they will be employed soon by these Chinese promoters?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware of this, Madam Speaker. I know that there was compensation relating to the current work and previous work being done at the quay at the Mauritius Container Terminal, but I am not aware of this.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether he can enquire whether his colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, met with the Legal Adviser of the fishermen, Mr Valayden, and they nearly came to a sort of agreement which was made public?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am sorry, I am not aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours!

At 1.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

SMALL PLANTERS - SUGAR - PRICE

(No. B/534) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the 2015 sugar

crop, he will state if the likely price of sugar for the small planters has been estimated so as to relieve the economic difficulties thereof, indicating if the bagasse transfer price of these small planters will be increased, as recommended in one report submitted to him, the more so, as the Central Electricity Board has made massive windfall gains recently.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the price of sugar for the Crop 2015 has been estimated as at to date by the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate at Rs13,000 per tonne, as compared to Rs12,693 for Crop 2014.

For the Crop 2014, Government had, through the Sugar Insurance Fund, come to the rescue of the sugar industry by waiving the insurance premium for the Crop 2014 and a special assistance of Rs2,000 per tonne of sugar accrued to the planters as recommended in the actuarial report commissioned by the Sugar Insurance Fund. This Government, conscious of the vulnerability of the small planters, made provision for an additional compensation of Rs1,400 per tonne of sugar accruing to them. Thus, the small planters producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar were eligible for a cash compensation of Rs3,400 per tonne as compared to Rs2,000 to other planters.

The actuarial report commissioned by the Sugar Insurance Fund also recommended that should the year 2015 be a non-event year and the price of sugar remains inferior to Rs15,800, then Government may have resort to a similar approach as for Crop 2014.

It is understood that the Sugar Insurance Fund (SIF) will need to proceed with the new actuarial exercise within the shortest delay given the exceptional circumstances still prevailing. The new actuarial exercise will define the new contours of the SIF system for the period post-2015.

Madam Speaker, regarding the price of bagasse, it has remained unchanged since it was first formulated back in the early 80s. As you are aware, Madam Speaker, I have set up a High Level Implementation Committee to review the recommendations proposed in the Landell Mills Commodities Report which include, among others, the review of the bagasse transfer price. This Committee which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry has had several working sessions with all the stakeholders of the Sugar Industry and will come up shortly with measures to address the problems facing the Industry, including the review of the bagasse transfer price. I can reassure the House that the price of bagasse accruing to the growers would need to be fair and reasonable.

Madam Speaker, it is relevant to point out that the previous Government had commissioned a study by Hunton and Williams to, *inter alia*, review payment of bagasse price to planters. I understand that the Report was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and, once again, we hear the same old story – the report is untraceable.

Contrary to the previous Government, this Government is giving serious consideration to review the bagasse price to ensure that growers are adequately compensated to increase their revenue stream and keep the sugar industry viable.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister informed us that he has set up a committee to review all this, but while going through the report, it recommends that negotiations with the IPPs could result in the IPP re-increasing their part of bagasse transfer price to the benefit of small planters. Being given the urgency of the situation and the problems planters are facing, especially these days and the price of bagasse has remained the same, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Minister, can the hon. Minister inform the House, in the interest of planters themselves, whether he could initiate urgent action to see to it that this issue of the increase of the price of bagasse for the small planters be treated urgently?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, since I have received that report which is Landell Mills Commodities Report, I have set up this Committee to look into all the measures, all the recommendations made in that report and one of the measures recommended with regard to the price of bagasse, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member, is with regard to reviewing that price. But we are looking at all the other issues as well and since we had to talk to all the stakeholders of the sugar industry, the Committee has, like I said, been meeting all those people and we feel that in the probably coming weeks, we will be in a position to come up with the final recommendations as to be proposed by that Committee which will have to go to Cabinet and then probably make it public for the whole industry to be aware of the measures that we are going to propose. But rest assured that I will make whatever necessary to ensure that the price that is being paid to planters at the moment with regard to bagasse which is only Rs100 will have to be reviewed and it has to be fair and reasonable. I can assure the House of that.

Mr Bhagwan: Do I understand from the hon. Minister when he said “fair and reasonable” that there is a substantial increase which is coming in the pipeline from what he is doing with regard to the planters?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I just mentioned that this Committee is looking at it, it won't be elegant for me now to comment on the substantiality of that amount, but I am sure it is going to reflect the real value that the bagasse is bringing to that sector.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, one last question. Can I ask the hon. Minister apart from what he has said about financial assistance to the planters and I hope it is forthcoming with the increase in the bagasse of the planters, can the hon. Minister inform the House and the planters in general, what other incentives, apart from financial incentives, that Government, his Ministry is trying to find out to give to the planters in these difficult days?

Mr Seeruttun: Apart from bagasse, Madam Speaker, we also, like I said, waived the insurance premium that is claimed to all growers and that insurance premium has been waived for the Crop 2014 and as mentioned in that actuarial report, it is recommended that for the Year 2015 as well that premium be waived, should the Crop Year be a non-event Crop Year. Apart from that, Government, in the last Budget that was presented in this House, has also made provision to provide assistance to small planters to make them go more towards Fairtrade label for the sugar that they produce which brings an additional USD60 per tonne of sugar that they produce under that Fairtrade label. And also with regard to the FORIP Scheme, an additional sum of Rs500 m. has been provided in the Budget 2015-2016, such that planters who need their land to be upgraded are provided with the necessary facilities to have their land upgraded.

Madam Speaker: One last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, thank you. We all know the *situation d'angoisse que sont en train de vivre les planteurs. L'honorable ministre doit le savoir.* From what we are hearing from the hon. Minister about the different incentives that are forthcoming, can the hon. Minister at least inform the House whether all that is being done and will be done for the planters, whether these are being transmitted to the planters? According to me, there is a problem of communication. The planters feel that they are left aside despite what is being done. So, can the hon. Minister at least inform the House whether he contemplates to meet the planters at least to inform them what is being done, what is forthcoming?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I have been meeting all the stakeholders ever since I have been appointed Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and like I said also, we have that committee which will be set up to really talk to all the stakeholders, including the

planters, small planters especially, and to have their views being taken on board and tomorrow itself we have the General Assembly of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate and I am going to address all the stakeholders tomorrow. So, that is going to be another forum for me to talk to them and to inform them of all the things that we are doing at the level of the Ministry with regard to that Industry.

PARASTATAL BODIES & GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMPANIES - CODE OF CONDUCT

(No. B/535) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the parastatal bodies and Government owned companies, he will state if -

- (a) his Ministry has prepared a code of conduct therefor, and
- (b) he has received representations to the effect that several chairpersons intervene daily in the day to day administration of the respective organisation, for example, the Chairperson of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, initiated in relation thereto, in each case.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I refer the hon. Member to the reply to PQ No. B/285 of 07 April 2015 when I informed the House that my Ministry had issued a Circular letter on 13 February 2015 to all Ministries and Departments to provide guidance and clarifications on the roles of Chairpersons and Chief Executives in public sector organisations.

Madam Speaker, the issue of this circular has been prompted by the numerous failures in the management and oversight of public sector organisations which have been compounded by unclear segregation of roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Boards and their Chief Executive Officers. This situation has, in many cases, led to abuse of office, other malpractices and also the weakening of our institutions and the erosion of trust in public sector organisations.

Accordingly, with a view to ensuring and enhancing oversight and good governance, it was decided that the roles and responsibilities of Chairpersons and Chief Executives must be kept separate. Consequently, the functions of Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

should not be exercised by the same individual and the Chairperson should not have any executive role.

As regards the Chairperson he or she is primarily responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the Board and is not allowed to interfere in the day to day management of the organisation. His or her main role is to put in place structures and procedures to achieve the Board's independence, to ascertain that all the relevant information is provided to the Board, to preside meetings and to provide overall leadership to the Board, while encouraging active participation of all Board members.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I have not received any representation at my Ministry, regarding non-compliance with the said Circular.

With regard to the MFDC, my Ministry is informed by the MFDC of the following –

Firstly, the day to day administration of the MFDC is under the responsibility of Mr Sachin Jootun, Director;

Secondly, the Chairperson of the MFDC is not involved in the day to day administration of the Corporation;

Thirdly, he has had a meeting with staff members of the Corporation when he was newly nominated;

Fourthly, he had a few site visits with officers of the MFDC regarding the relocation of MFDC offices and studio.

Mr Bhagwan: I will take a few supplementary questions, Madam Speaker, with your permission. I will start with the MFDC. This Government is talking of good governance and issuing circulars. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the present Chairperson of the MFDC – I will call him the 'local Danny Denzongpa' - was arrested on 30 November...

(Interruptions)

He is our 'local Danny Denzongpa'! He was arrested on 30 November 2010 under....

(Interruptions)

Let me ask the question. He is a member of the PMSD, no? He is not a member of the PMSD, the one I am talking...

Was he arrested on 30 November under PoCA? He was released on bail and is still on bail *pour trafic d'influence* at the Trust Fund for Specialised Care.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of any Danny Denzongpa having been arrested in Mauritius. I think Danny Denzongpa is an actor in India.

Mr Bhagwan: He was arrested, I am saying it officially here – what's his name?

(Interruptions)

I know. He is on bail. Ag. Prime Minister, he is on bail.

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: He is on bail.

Madam Speaker: Ask your question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Does the hon. Minister of Good Governance find it normal - he is somebody who is supposed to ensure that there is good governance - that the Chairperson of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation is on bail for *trafic d'influence*? Is this normal? Does the hon. Minister find it normal?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate that I have a lot of responsibilities as Minister of Good Governance and I am assuming those responsibilities, but, unfortunately, I am not a Judge of the Supreme Court, I cannot prejudge a case of the court.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House, the population that he will ensure his colleague responsible for that parastatal body, that pending whatever happens in court, will have this person replaced?

(Interruptions)

We are talking about good governance, *moralité*.

Mr Bhadain: Well, Madam Speaker, as I have stated, if there is any case in court, then, of course, the Court of Justice of our country will deal with that accordingly and, with regard to the procedures that are being put in place regarding the roles of Chairpersons and CEOs, this is being adhered to and I can also reassure the hon. Member that there is a team within my Ministry who is actively looking at conducting the performance appraisal of those Boards and the roles of these Chairpersons and CEOs.

Mr Bhagwan: I will come to the first part of the question. The Minister has been provided with information, but that person goes there only for a few minor activities. Is the hon. Minister aware that this Chairperson who is convicted – convicted Chairperson. He is...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Who has been accused...

(Interruptions)

accused...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Please, withdraw this word 'convicted'.

Mr Bhagwan: Yes. Who is accused – Chairperson. He not only goes there a few times, he is always there *pe tire photo ek acteur, actrice*, he has been travelling abroad. So, can the hon. Minister give assurance that he will conduct an enquiry for what I am saying and see to it that good governance prevails there and the Chairperson is not the MD – and the MD himself is complaining?

Mr Bhadain: To reassure the hon. Member, I can certainly look into that. If there are any procedures, malpractices as to how the Chairperson and the CEO are acting right now, this will be looked into by my Ministry, but with regard to the court case, this is unfortunately not under my purview.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentions good governance and code of conduct. Being given that for anyone who seeks employment in the private sector, he needs to provide a Certificate of Morality, so may I ask the hon. Minister whether, in his code of conduct and criteria to be appointed, to represent Government on Board, that he would insist that henceforth all these nominees produce their clean Certificate of Morality and disclose whether there is any Police case against them ongoing?

Mr Bhadain: I am sure my hon. friend Uteem would know that when you ask for a Certificate of Morality, if there is a case which is being investigated or tried against somebody, it would not appear on the Certificate of Morality. What would appear is when somebody is convicted, and, at this moment in time, I understand, there is no conviction.

(Interruptions)

But I do appreciate that this is a very good initiative and I am going to look into it.

**BELLE MARE WATER PARK AND LEISURE VILLAGE – STRATEGIC
PARTNER**

(No. B/536) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Belle Mare Water Park and Leisure Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sugar Investment Trust, information as to if a new strategic partner for the renovation and management thereof has been secured and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the strategic partner therefor, and
- (b) terms and conditions of the partnership agreement therefor and, if not, why not.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Sugar Investment Trust that the Belle Mare Water Park and Leisure Village has ceased its operations since October 2013 following the publication of the report of the Commission of Enquiry on the death of two children which occurred at the Waterpark.

Since that time, the Sugar Investment Trust has been in search of a strategic partner to upgrade and modernise the infrastructure and propose new activities to attract more people to the Waterpark whilst maintaining the highest standards in terms of security and safety.

The Sugar Investment Trust has, in July 2015, received a proposal from a potential strategic partner to revive the Waterpark. Negotiations are still going on and will be finalised in due course.

As no agreement has been reached yet and no Memorandum of Understanding signed, it would not be appropriate and proper, at this stage, to disclose the name of the strategic partner and the details of the negotiations.

Mr Ameer Meea: May I ask the hon. Minister why there has not been any open tender for the management of Belle Mare Waterpark?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, as you are probably aware, at the Sugar Investment Trust, we have not had a Chief Executive Officer for some time. We have advertised for the post and I think yesterday was the closing date for that post. Hopefully, we are going to have someone new at the head of that Institution with also new Board members to be appointed following election which is due shortly. So, probably, we will go for that, but I must say that, in the meantime, we have been receiving offers. I have been told also that last year we have

had three firms that were interested in that particular project, but none of those three suited the conditions laid out by the SIT and were not considered.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could repeat for how long, how many months, this Belle Mare Water Park has not been functioning and what happens monthly? I take it that no one has been thrown out of work and, therefore, what is happening, what monthly losses are accumulating?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, like I mentioned in my reply earlier on, it has ceased its operation since October 2013, and the cost of maintaining and operating that Water Park which is now closed cost around Rs1.3 m. per month. There used to be 36 permanent employees posted there. Of those 36, 20 have been redeployed elsewhere within the group. Like I said, we are looking for new partners to join in to be able to put it back into operation hopefully very soon.

Mr Ameer Meea: With the coming up of a new strategic partner, would the SIT invest additional sum of money, and, if yes, does the hon. Minister have any amount that will be invested in this project?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must say that the SIT itself is in big financial trouble with some dodgy projects that were undertaken in the last few years and that have not brought any money in those projects. So, I must say that as it is now, they have not got enough financial resources to put into that Water Park to make it up and running, unfortunately.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

SQUATTERS – REGULARISATION

(No. B/537) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the squatters, he will state the number thereof, district-wise, indicating the measures that will be taken in relation thereto, indicating where matters stand in relation to those who are eligible for the regularisation of their situation.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, the House certainly knows that the problem of squatting State land is a long-standing one and it has existed for many decades now.

I believe that the inaction and lack of interest on the part of the previous Government to deal with the problem at hand has worsened the situation. Consequently, this Government has inherited a situation where families with babies, old people and in a case, an old lady of 102 years old as well as children are living in poor and bad conditions, with no basic necessities such as water and electricity.

However, the present Government is committed to addressing very rigorously the issue in a meaningful way. For the purpose, a plan has been developed so that the approach is very humane while taking into consideration the socio-economic implications, on a strictly merit basis.

To gauge the extent of the problem, my Ministry recently carried out an exercise and it has been found that, as at July 2015, there were 1054 cases of squatting on State land throughout the island.

The situation, district-wise, is as follows -

District	No. of cases
Rivière du Rempart	99
Flacq	114
Grand Port	81
Savanne	78
Black River	232
Port Louis	347
Pamplemousses	50
Moka	34
Plaines Wilhems	19

Making a total of 1,054 squatters.

Madam Speaker, Government acknowledges that it is a tough exercise to eliminate squatting. However, in an endeavour to assist these people in securing a decent dwelling, my Ministry is attending to eligible cases either by way of relocation of these squatters or by regularisation *in situ* of their occupation of the State land. A cut-off date of 01 July 2015 has been adopted so that the situation can be controlled.

The plan that has been developed provides for 422 cases to be considered for regularisation *in situ*, subject to the families concerned being found eligible. 472 other families will be relocated as the sites squatted upon are either not suitable for residential purpose or are required for Government projects, such as the Phases 2 and 3 of the Ring Road Project. Regarding the remaining 160 cases, investigation is being carried out by my Ministry to determine the suitability of the sites in terms of accommodating residential units, and if otherwise, relocation would be envisaged.

As regards the 422 cases which have been considered for regularisation, survey works have already started on site and the squatters have been requested to fill in a form giving their particulars. In the same breath, a social inquiry is being carried out by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to establish the profile of these households.

I am circulating the details regarding the sites for both relocation and regularisation cases.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that persons who are drawing high incomes or who are owners of any immovable property would not be eligible for the grant of a building site lease and necessary legal action would be taken to have them evicted from the site squatted upon.

To ensure that squatting State land does not become a never-ending problem, I have arranged for a mobilisation of teams made up of officers of my Ministry, "*Police des Terres*", and the regular Police Force to deal with any new reported case of squatting. The teams will cover not only the sites where presently there is squatting but also other areas which are considered to be squatting prone. The provisions of the law will be rigorously applied.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that with the structured approach which is being adopted, the problem of squatting State land will be effectively dealt with and the cooperation

of all stakeholders is essential for that matter, as squatting is a problem which goes well beyond party politics and other such considerations.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just stated that there have been 422 squatters who have been found eligible for regularisation. Can I ask him what has been the criteria for eligibility for these squatters?

Mr Soodhun: As I have just informed in my statement, there is a criteria, that is, they do not have any property or the salaries are above Rs10,000.

Mr Bérenger: From what I have heard, we have 1,054 registered squatters and enquiries are being carried out to see how many of them do qualify. We have been given a cut-off date, 01 July 2015, and those enquiries are going on. Can I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister within what time frame, roughly, is it a question of weeks or months, before these enquiries are completed and, the squatters that do not qualify - and those who qualify - are informed that they do not qualify?

Mr Soodhun: Nearly in three months' time.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned the number of squatters on State land. But would he agree that the Ministry also needs to carry out a survey to find out the number of people, especially poor people, who are staying on abandoned land or private land as he would have a complete picture of the number of homeless in Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: I thank the hon. Member. We have taken into consideration that there are people who are squatters on private land. I would also like to inform the hon. Member that we are going to deal with those squatters. For example, in Tranquebar, we have nearly 82 and due to the Phase I and Phase 2 of the Ring Road which is coming, we are going to relocate them to Pointe-aux-Sables and then we are going to hand over to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport which will then be responsible for this State land.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us - when he says that legal action would be taken - what sort of legal action does he contemplate and when such legal action has been taken and those people find themselves without a home, is there any other scheme which he proposes whereby people will not end up being homeless?

Mr Soodhun: First, as I have explained, we have nine districts. I have put nine officers and a team of five Police Officers. So, they are in charge of the whole district so that we do not have the new as I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we have to take precaution that the new squatters cannot come in. So, they don't come directly, they just come there and you know, put the Police...

(Interruptions)

Let me explain. Why are you in a hurry? Cool!

(Interruptions)

What I am just explaining is that action will be taken against the new squatters as from now. Because what we have done is that we have already enquired about the number I have given, 1,055 plus one will be illegal, we are going to warn them first and we are going to go strictly by the law according to the Land Acquisition Act.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has indicated to the House that the first phase of the regularisation process is to decide upon the eligibility of the squatters. May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister - once this eligibility exercise has been carried out, since we know there is a time frame until the occupiers formally get their formal lease once the eligibility criteria has been agreed upon - whether the Ministry could issue a letter of intent so that these occupiers, on the basis of the letter of intent, can be provided with electricity, water supply and the utility services?

Mr Soodhun: Thank you. I think it is a very good question, 422 will be immediately offered the letter of intent so that they can help all these people to get water and electricity supply. So, we are going to do it in a couple of weeks.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just said that the eligibility criteria should be one who should not possess any land and should not have a high salary. Can I ask the hon. Minister what does he mean by high salary, what should be the amount?

Mr Soodhun: In the past, it was Rs8,500, now we have reached up to the sum of Rs10,000.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, we have been talking all this time about squatters and the issue of eligibility criteria, the salary that they are drawing. There are also, according to my information, some sugar estates, some sugar companies that are also squatters on many areas of State land and, in particular, the old rail tracks whereby they have squatted upon those lands and I remember Constituency No. 13 in Rivière des Anguilles where there is a huge area that has been squatted upon by the Sugar Estate. Now, I am sure and I hope that the eligibility criteria would be applied very strictly here, that they don't have any other home or that they do not earn more or less than Rs10,000 and what would be done, therefore, to ensure that all sugar estates move off the State land?

Mr Soodhun: Concerning the Sugar Estate, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agro Industry is looking into it, what we call the camp and this will not fall under my purview.

DIABETES - CHILDREN - SENSITISATION

(No. B/538) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to diabetes, he will state the number of children suffering therefrom as at to date, indicating the measures and policies applicable in relation thereto at schools and in hospitals, respectively.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, in reply to the first part of the question I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/141 on 03 March 2015 where I provided the House with statistics on the number of children suffering from diabetes and where I also elaborated on the services provided to diabetic patients. Madam Speaker, as at 31 August 2015, the number of children below 18 years suffering from Type I diabetes is 181 and the number for Type II is 34.

With regard to the second part of the question, my Ministry has adopted a series of measures to sensitise school children and the public at large and the preventive measures to be taken in respect of lifestyle and consumption patterns.

In this context, the following activities are regularly carried out by my Ministry –

- (i) Ongoing primary school health programme whereby pupils of Standard I and Standard V are examined by community physicians. Overweight and obese children are referred to health centres for further investigation and follow-up. They are also referred to the nutritionist for dietary counselling.
- (ii) The screening of students of Form III between 13 to 14 years and Lower Six between 17 to 18 years for risk factors related to diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. Those children with risk factors are referred to the regional hospitals for follow-up and counselling. Support for Type I diabetic children by diabetes specialised nurses in all regional hospitals is also provided. There is also provision of free glucose meters, testing strips, sharp disposal containers as well as latest insulin analogs to all children with Type I diabetes aiming at achieving an optimal control of blood sugar. We also have yearly conduct of open day activities in all the five regional hospitals under diabetes and vascular health centre where such patients are screened for eye, kidney, cardiac complications as well as other diabetes associated disorders.

Oral healthcare treatment and appropriate counselling for Type I diabetic children are also provided. There is also conduct of health education programme on healthy lifestyle in hospitals and health centres for diabetic patients and there is finally a mass sensitisation on non-communicable diseases targeting the public at large, including children.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre s'il existe un personnel formé au niveau des écoles ou un protocole de collaboration avec son ministère en d'urgence concernant ces élèves?

Mr Gayan : Madam Speaker, I am informed that there have been programmes in schools where these patients can be present and participate and there are also programmes to give training and assistance to the parents, but there are also health nurses and community centres in the area and in case there is an emergency, they can be contacted.

Dr. Joomaye: I would like to know from the hon. Minister the number of dieticians specialised in paediatric nutrition in post at your Ministry.

Mr Gayan: Do I understand diabetics' nutritionist?

Dr. Joomaye: Dieticians specialised in paediatric nutrition.

Mr Gayan: Well, I only have the information about the nutritionists, but I take it nutritionists cater from babies to old age.

Mr Mohamed: Since the Minister said that there exist programs to advise on situations where children are suffering from diabetes, could he tell us whether there are any leaflets that he could provide us with or table in this Assembly to show us what exactly is an advice or pamphlets or leaflets informative that are shared not only to students, but also to parents in such situations? Has this been provided for and does it exist?

Mr Gayan: I do not have the pamphlets with me, but I will certainly look into the matter and communicate it to the House.

Mr Leopold: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is working with NGOs specialised in the follow-up of small diabetic children together with his Ministry.

Mr Gayan: Yes, I am given to understand that there is an NGO, the '*Ti Diams*' actively involved in this.

AUTISM - AGE GROUPS

(No. B/539) **Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to autism, he will state the number of patients suffering therefrom, indicating the -

(a) age group thereof, and

(b) measures provided by Government to help such patients.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): I wish to inform the House that according to the information received from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 51 patients of the following age groups have been diagnosed with autism as at 15 September 2015. Age –

0 up to 10 - 37

10 up to 20 - 13

20 up to 30 - 1

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that no comprehensive survey has been carried out until now to determine the exact number of persons suffering from autism in Mauritius. However, according to the figures available at my Ministry, there are around 200 autistic children aged between 3 to 18 years old. We are currently in the process of setting up a new database whereby beneficiaries of basic invalidity pension, carers and other social aid allowances will be classified in terms of the diseases they are suffering from. It will then be possible to obtain an exact figure of those patients who suffer from autism.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry is taking the following measures to help autistic persons -

- (i) provision of a Basic Invalidity Pension of Rs5,000 to patients above 15;
- (ii) provision of a monthly carer's allowance of Rs2,500 to patients who require constant care and attention as certified by an approved Medical Practitioner;
- (iii) provision of Social Aid in the amount of Rs2,460 to patients below 15 and whose parents' annual income does not exceed Rs250,000.
- (iv) provision of an additional special allowance of Rs1,350 for patients who are severely disabled. The special allowance is made up as follows -
 - (a) Rs450 for those who are bedridden
 - (b) Rs450 for those who suffer from incontinence
 - (c) Rs450 based on severity of disability
- (v) free transport for both autistic children and adults;
- (vi) refund of bus fare by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to parents who accompany their autistic children to schools/ day-care centres;
- (vii) provision of wheelchairs, spectacles and hearing aids in some cases;
- (viii) an annual allowance of Rs595 to children attending school to enable them to cover their school expenses;

- (ix) the organisation of Respite Care programmes and leisure activities by our Ministry for disabled children, including those suffering from autism;
- (x) provision of *ad hoc* financial assistance from the NGO Trust Fund to “*Autisme Maurice*”, and
- (xi) with a view to enhancing capacity-building of NGOs catering for autistic children, assistance from *ALEFPA, Association laïque pour l'Education, la Formation, la Prévention et l'Autonomie* from Reunion Island has been sought. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed shortly.

Furthermore, I wish to add that my Ministry is presently working on a Disability Bill which will better protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including those suffering from autism. The Bill will also make provisions for the setting up of One-stop shop to provide better services to them.

It is also good to be highlighted that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare do intervene and provide support services to all cases of children at risk, including reported cases of children suffering from autism.

I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that in public hospitals all patients suffering from autism are being followed by a multidisciplinary team comprising Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapists.

In critical cases where patients cannot be cared for at home, they are admitted in the adolescent wards of Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre for daily follow-up by Psychiatrists and Psychologists. In addition, parental counselling, family therapy are being provided by Psychologists and Social Workers.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre quel moyen de détection existe au niveau du ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la Vie, et s'il existe un protocole d'aide dans les écoles pré-primaires ou même dans les garderies en matière de détection?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, I think this question should be put to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Mr Ramano: La question était adressée directement au ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la Vie.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano, if you have got a question for the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, then next time you put the question to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The hon. Member will understand that it is my Ministry which is offering all the measures to cater for the care of persons with autism.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has mentioned that certain patients suffering from autism go to the Brown Sequard Hospital - if I heard her correctly. But, why there? Because, if you suffer from hearing, you are admitted in a place which has a different connotation. So, why not take these children somewhere else?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I have not said that all the children are sent to Brown Sequard Hospital. If some of them need help from that hospital, then they are sent there and they are admitted to the adolescent wards and special care are being given to those children.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramano!

PRIVATE & PUBLIC SCHOOLS – CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

(No. B/540) **Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the students suffering from autism, she will state the -

- (a) number thereof presently admitted in private and public schools, and
- (b) existing specific measures provided thereto.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a), I am informed that as at date there are 168 children with autism admitted in both public and private schools as follows –

Sn	Schools	Number

1	Pre-primary schools	16
2	Integrated Units in Primary schools	20
3	SEN schools run by NGOs	132

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the education of children with special needs, including autism is high on the agenda of my Ministry. In this context, various measures have been taken to cater for the specific needs of children with autism as follows -

Two Integrated Units dedicated for children with autism are operational at the Gopeechand Chuttur Government School, Ecroignard and at the J.T. Ramsoondur Government School at Solferino. The one at Solferino also caters for children with other impairments.

Three Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centres are operational at Ferney, Colonel Maingard, Beau Bassin and Plaine des Papayes.

These Centres provide a range of services, including assessment, diagnosis, therapeutic services, sessions with the students and their families, capacity-building including workshops, parenting as well as counselling programmes to the children with special education needs, including those with autism. They are staffed by a multi-disciplinary team, including professionals such as Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Educational Social Workers.

Four new Resource Centres are being constructed at the Rajcoomar Gujadhur Government School in Flacq, Allée Brillant Government School, Rivière des Anguilles Government School and Moka Government School, and they will all be operational in 2016.

My Ministry has been conducting regular special admission exercises to register children with special needs. Out of 15 applications received this year from parents of children with special education needs, three of them are on the autism spectrum and will be admitted in schools that best caters for their specific needs.

Adapted curricula have been developed by the MIE in respect of children suffering from autism. These curricula have been piloted in special education needs schools run by NGOs as well as in the Government Integrated Units.

The curriculum materials will be enhanced and finalised taking on board feedback received.

The Mauritius Institute of Education has been running a Teacher-Training Programme whereby teachers working in specialised schools learn to adapt the curriculum to respond to the needs of learners with autism and to develop strategies required to optimise their learning opportunities. Teachers are also trained to develop an individual education plan and to make use of appropriate assistive devices to respond to unique needs of the learners with autism.

As from January 2015, the MIE is running a Diploma in Special Education Needs comprising a component in which teachers are specialised in the education, pedagogy and assessment and intervention strategies for the rehabilitation of children with autism.

Furthermore, in terms of our collaborative venture with NGOs, teachers working in the integrated units catering for autism have received a training course on “Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)” which was run by *Autisme Maurice*, an NGO catering for children with autism, in collaboration with a French association *Autisme Bel Avenir*.

The Grant-in-aid is provided as a financial support to the NGOs running special education needs schools. Provision is also being made for the enlistment of Carers, whose ratio is normally one carer for 15 children. However, in the case of autism, a customised ratio of one Carer to two pupils is adopted as an enhanced support is being provided to better take on board children with autism. Parenting Programmes, including meetings, workshops and working sessions are organised by the Ministry and the ECCEA to get the involvement of parents in facilitating the education of children with autism. The involvement of parents as partners enables them to play an effective role in the education process of the child with autism.

Furthermore, the Special Education Needs Unit of my Ministry, the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority are maintaining regular contact with individual parents and providing dedicated support and guidance as appropriate.

Madam Speaker: Do you have a long reply, hon. Minister?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, not much, just two or more points.

Madam Speaker: Otherwise, you may circulate your reply.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, only two points.

The collaboration with development partners are also on board. With a view to securing expertise in the field of special education needs and to enhance the local capacity, my Ministry is working with non-state organisations, development partners and friendly countries on a bilateral cooperation basis and we have been dealing with the European Union which has come up with training programmes; training for trainers as well as providing technical support for the development of the Special Education Needs Framework for pre-primary sector which includes, among others, children with autism. A committee comprising of representatives of the MIE, the ECCEA and my Ministry is working at present on the implementation programme.

During my last visit to the Reunion Island, other collaborations have been engaged with their education institute to come up with further training programmes for children and teachers working with children with special education needs.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, en 2012, le ministre d'alors avait annoncé un *comprehensive survey* avec la collaboration des *stakeholders* pour la formulation d'une politique d'ensemble. Peut-on savoir si ce *survey* a été fait et est-ce que l'honorable ministre est disposée à rendre ce *survey* public?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Le *survey* a été fait dans le domaine de l'éducation et hier on a publié le nombre dans le '*Educational Statistics*'. Au fait, valeur du jour, il y a 168 élèves dans nos institutions que ce soit privées ou publiques. Mais, bien sûr, le *survey* va continuer et on va continuer à suivre de près nos enfants ayant besoin de *special needs*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have, myself, come across a situation of a child suffering from autism and the issue is of being able to identify in a normal school whether a child through various symptoms is, in fact, potentially suffering from autism. I now come to my question. In England, I have come across recommendations whereby all

teachers should be provided in teacher training with a special curriculum in order to be able to identify a child that is suffering from autism and not to make that child feel excluded or dumb or stupid as is the case sometimes in Mauritius, during the time that we were in Government. I am not saying anything wrong. So, could the hon. Minister instead of, I appreciated, having talked about existing training measures for children and for teachers in special needs' environment, how about extending this to every single teacher to enable them to identify those learning difficulties of an autistic child and to be able to advise children accordingly?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Madam Speaker, this is being taken on board. The whole Teacher Education Programme is being revisited and especially for children requiring special education needs and, in fact, not only this is being done at the level of the Mauritius Institute of Education, but the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority has also trained a number of its teachers to be able to find out, to assess and to diagnose cases of children showing autistic behaviours.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I know from the hon. Minister what is the policy of screening at school level by doctors?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The screening is being done by the teachers themselves right now because in the case of autism, it is more of a case of developmental disorder rather than a disease as such. So, the teachers are being trained and, obviously, if there is a need for special attention by Medical Practitioners, the schools would obviously ask them to come for that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, dans les différentes *Integrated Units*, les *Government Schools*, par exemple, Henry Buswell Government School, le nombre d'élèves a sensiblement diminué parce que selon les parents les élèves sont carrément enfermés, n'ont même pas le droit de participer aux différentes assemblées ni aux différentes activités de l'école. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut revoir la situation?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Au fait, ce que nous sommes en train de faire c'est d'avoir, dans les écoles, des unités spécialisées pour les enfants ayant quelques troubles que ce soit

des handicaps physiques ou des cas d'autisme ou des *deaf problems*. Mais notre politique est de s'assurer que les enfants intègrent vraiment l'espace scolaire et, bien sûr, nous allons voir et nous allons nous assurer que cela se fait ainsi.

Madam Speaker: One last question on this, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: I have seen that on the Internet, so there is a list whereby there are 47 - in England - criteria which help teachers to identify who is an autistic child. Could the hon. Minister consider asking her officers to surf the net - instead of going to take advice otherwise - at least; the check list is already there in the British Education System.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Obviously, the officers of my Ministry are doing the same and, in fact, we don't talk about autism as such. We talk about the spectrum of autism and you have a whole spectrum starting with people showing slight or mild cases of autism up to cases of severe autism when the person does not want to interact at all. Obviously, the officers of my Ministry have done their job.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

CEB - ST. LOUIS POWER STATION - TENDER

(No. B/541) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the last tender exercise for the St. Louis Project – CEB Tender CPB-22-2014 for the Redevelopment of St. Louis Power Station – Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 4x15MW Diesel Generating Sets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the –

- (a) name/s of the bidder/s thereof, and
- (b) reasons why the bid exercise was cancelled.

(Withdrawn)

TRAFFIC LIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM – MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

(No. B/542) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard

to the Traffic Light Control System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) terms and conditions of the maintenance contracts awarded in relation thereto, and
- (b) name/s of the contractor/s therefor.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed that a tender exercise for the maintenance of Traffic Light Control system around the island was launched on 15 October 2014.

The contract was awarded to Sobany & Sons Co. Ltd in February 2015 for the sum of Rs6,982,189.95, inclusive of VAT for a period of one year.

The contractor is responsible, *inter alia*, for carrying out daily inspections of all sites and for ensuring that the Traffic Signal Equipment are functional at all times.

The terms and conditions of the contract include -

- Replacement and repair works, maintenance and re-programming, submission of weekly reports and modification of traffic signal equipment.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling the detailed terms and conditions of the maintenance contract.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask a supplementary question to the hon. Minister? With regard to the maintenance and repair of traffic lights, can the hon. Minister tell us whether he is satisfied, whether the terms and conditions of the contract are respected, whether there are timely repairs because we all know we have problems on the main roads and subsidiary roads where traffic lights are broken, but they take too much time to have these repaired and this is a constant and permanent cause of accident?

Mr Bodha: I thank my hon. colleague for this comment. In fact, the terms of reference provide for a submission to the Officer-in-Charge, that is, the TMRSU, the Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit, by each Tuesday before 12 o'clock, of one copy of a report covering all the faults and any repairs made during the previous week, together with the list which has been submitted by the hotline. I am confident now that we are going to apply this

condition of the contract; I agree with my hon. colleague that sometimes the hotline may not be working or when the faults have been registered, they are not being corrected as soon as it should be done.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister inform us who is the owner of the software for the Traffic Light System and why it has not been commissioned publicly?

Mr Bodha: Who is the owner and why it has not been commissioned?

Mr Jahangeer: No, the system itself, the software.

Mr Bodha: From information I have, this is with regard to the maintenance, then you have the question as regard to the equipment itself. Well, over the years now the equipment have been supplied by the same contractor.

Madam Speaker: No, it is the software.

Mr Bodha: The equipment have been supplied...

Madam Speaker: Software.

Mr Bodha: Yes. The equipment have been supplied by the same contractor. So, I believe that the software must be processed by this company.

Dr. Sorefan: May I ask the hon. Minister whether some traffic lights have timers because, at Quatre Bornes, near the market, most of the time at 10 o'clock, the traffic light goes off?

Mr Bodha: I believe so.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

(No. B/543) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether he will state if he is aware of a letter from Mrs D. T. of *Association Justice et Vérité* about unfinished business related to the Truth and Justice Commission and, if so, indicate if he has taken any action in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like to emphasise that barely one month after the Government came into power, a Ministerial Committee was set up under my Chairmanship to reconsider the recommendations contained in the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Ministerial Committee has had several meetings and has decided, in the first instance, to group the recommendations contained in the Report under three major themes -

- (i) Memorialising slavery as well as a better understanding of Mauritian history and culture;
- (ii) Dispossession of land and legal support, and
- (iii) Economic empowerment of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers.

The Committee has made several recommendations -

- the setting of a Land Research and Mediation Unit, which we discussed this morning,
- the forwarding of the Mandary report to the Attorney-General,
- the Ministry of Arts and Culture to look for land to construct the Museum of Slavery to be located either in Port Louis or Le Morne. In the meantime, the Ministry would arrange for the purchase of exhibits that could be displayed in the Museum, and
- the Ministry of Arts and Culture would submit a report on what has been done and what would need to be done for better memorialisation of the economic contribution of slaves in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, Government is committed to fostering a just, fair and equal society to give opportunity to all. It has and is taking many decisions to respect its commitment.

In this connection, Government has taken a series of measures which are in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission. These are listed hereunder -

- The old age pension has been increased to Rs5,000/- per month.
- A salary compensation of Rs600/- per month has been granted to all full-time employees.
- Government will construct 2,000 social houses per year, with a larger surface area.
- The Ministry of Housing and Lands has regularised and is continuing to regularise hundreds of cases of squatters.

- A Marshall Plan on poverty alleviation is being worked out. A multi-disciplinary team of UNDP experts is actually in Mauritius to start working on this.
- A Ministerial Committee has been set up under the chair of the Vice-Prime Minister to look into the issue of asbestos.
- Constitution of a national database of vulnerable households registered in the Social Register of Mauritius for targeting pro-poor services.
- The setting up of a Poverty Observatory.
- A new CSR policy has been devised to allow companies to directly provide help to those needy persons.
- An amount of Rs100 m. per year has been provided for the love-bridge project to address in an integrated way the issue of poverty.
- More than 33,000 needy students have benefitted from school materials in 2015.
- A nine-year schooling plan is being implemented.
- A minimum salary wage is being devised.
- Zero tolerance policy for people who endanger the cohesive fabric of our nation as recently demonstrated.
- All Boards of parastatal bodies to be multi-cultural.
- Review of the Certificate of Character Act.

Madam Speaker, since the submission of the Report of the Truth and Justice Commission in 2011, and the setting up of a High-Powered Committee, which again I chaired, many of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission have been implemented. I would like to mention but a few examples -

- (i) An Equal Opportunities Commission has been set up.
- (ii) Creole is being recognised as a language and is an examinable subject at Primary level.
- (iii) The case of Ratsitanina has been reviewed by the State Law Office and an interim report has been submitted.
- (iv) A list of 20 historical sites associated with slavery has been listed as National Heritage, and research is ongoing.
- (v) The “Festival International Creole” is being held every year to promote the Creole culture and it is in its 10th year.

- (vi) Le Morne was listed as World Heritage Site in 2008.
- (vii) The Workfare and Youth Employment Programme has been set up.
- (viii) Free meals are provided in all ZEP Schools.
- (ix) The freezing by Act of Parliament of land prescriptions.
- (x) The setting-up of Land Administration, Valuation and Management Information System (LAVIMS) which is a cadastre system, and
- (xi) The provision of artisanal fish farms to fishermen.

Madam Speaker, the list is too long to be enumerated here and I will place in the Library the details of the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will take note that, in terms of assistance to deprived areas, numerous works have been undertaken, including in Port Louis: rehabilitation of Karo Kalyptis; provision of electricity at Quartier Robert Scott, Cité La Cure; relocation of squatters at Marjolin, Cite La Cure; rehabilitation of Cité Roche Bois; construction of Sir Gaëtan Duval Leisure Park in Roche Bois and, of course, constant upgrading of Père Laval Historical Site.

Mr Lesjongard: The question I put to the hon. Minister is a simple question concerning a letter addressed to him or to the Prime Minister by the *Association Justice et Vérité* related to those families who have been dispossessed of their land. In that letter, Madam Speaker, they state that they have requested a meeting with the Ag. Prime Minister since 21 April 2015 and, until now, he has not responded to their request. May I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether he will receive those families or whether there is a problem for him to receive those families?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the whole issue relates to land. My hon. friend, here, was Minister of Housing and Lands for so many years. What did he do? Why does it have to be left to another Government, another Minister to look at the issue? Madam Speaker, the hon. Member should have taken his responsibility when he was Minister of Housing and Lands and he did not do so, and that is the truth. And maybe now, he is having some pangs of remorse, I understand. Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, I will receive the lady at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, this has nothing to do with my question. I am talking about land which those families have been dispossessed.

(Interruptions)

If you want to know! We regularised the cases of 2,000 squatters when I was Minister of Housing and Lands....

Madam Speaker: Put your question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is simple. You have with you a report,...

Madam Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Lesjongard: ...and you said that in your reply, submitted by Mr Mandary. They want to know what is in that report - those 43 families. That is why they have requested you for a meeting. It is as simple as that, Ag. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, I am drawing your attention. Address the Chair! Don't address the Minister directly!

Mr Lesjongard: So, tell us why you cannot meet those people and those families!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will meet them with pleasure. There is no need to get excited. I will meet them with pleasure.

(Interruptions)

And I'll mention again, five years he was Minister of Housing and Lands...

(Interruptions)

Five years, he was Minister of Housing and Lands, Madam. These people have been dispossessed for hundreds of years; he could have taken some attention to it. But now he has some remorse, he is pleading for them. I will receive them with pleasure. But, Madam Speaker, what we are doing, and I say that in no uncertain terms, we are providing help as never before to these poor people to recover, hopefully, and take possession again of their land *malgré les problèmes légaux qui existent*.

Madam Speaker: You have a question, hon. Lesjongard? Last question on this issue!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister, if we did not have that Truth and Justice Commission, this issue would not have been raised today in this House? We have had that Commission and you were at one time responsible to implement the recommendations of that Commission. My question is again very simple: will you meet those families and brief them on what the situation is?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, address the Chair! Don't address the Ag. Prime Minister!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I answered, Madam Speaker, but I hope the hon. Member is not saying that he was not aware that during the 18th century, 19th century, people have been dispossessed and he wanted to wait for the report of the Truth and Justice Commission to learn about it. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – STAFF - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/544) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the recruitment of staff in the private secondary schools funded by the Private Secondary School Authority, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the composition of the panel of interviewers therefor and procedures laid down and followed for the appointment of the members thereof;
- (b) the total amount of money disbursed in terms of salaries of the staff of the educational institutions registered with the Authority for the year ending 31 December 2014, and
- (c) if any mechanism is in place to appraise the performance of the non-teaching staff members of the private secondary schools.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in the context of the implementation of Government policy for free education, grants are disbursed for payment of emoluments to teaching and non-teaching staff of registered Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools through the PSSA which is the authority responsible for payment of grants under section 15 of the PSSA Act.

The staff of these Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools are not *per se* employees of the PSSA; the legal employer of all the members of staff employed is the school, represented by its Manager.

Madam Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the effect that sections 16(4) (a) and (b) of the PSSA Act clearly provide that by the reason of payment of emoluments to a school, the PSSA shall not be regarded as the employer. This provision of

the Act further highlights that the school shall always remain the employer and shall be responsible for matters of promotion and supervision.

As such, the PSSA, not being the legal employer of the staff, does not directly intervene in the recruitment made by the schools which generally have their recruitment mechanism.

However, I am advised by the PSSA that whenever a vacancy arises, the authority ascertains that the person recruited -

- (i) holds the qualifications required as per the terms and conditions of service of the Private Secondary Schools under the PRB, and
- (ii) falls within the entitlement of the school concerned.

Grants towards the salary of the staff concerned are disbursed once these requirements are met and all necessary clearances are submitted to the authority.

PSSA, as a regulatory body, has to ensure that payments of grants made towards emoluments (salaries and allowances) are in accordance with the provisions of the Pay Research Bureau.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the PSSA that, in regard to Grant-aided Private Secondary Schools, the total amount of money disbursed in terms of salary of staff, for the year ending 31 December 2014, stands at Rs2.5 billion.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) of the question, and as already pointed out earlier, matters pertaining to supervision and promotion of staff statutorily rest with the school which shall always be the employer as provided under section 16 of the PSSA Act. I wish to add that performance appraisal rests upon the management of the school which is under the responsibility of the Manager and the Rector.

However, it is to be noted that there are cases whereby the PSSA receives representations with regard to the appraisal of performance of staff for the purpose of payment of increment in which case the PSSA examines such representations, on a case to case basis.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The amount invested for the year 2014, therefore, as stated by the hon. Minister is Rs2.5 billion. The issue is one of quality of education and, of course, value for the sum invested. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if she is satisfied with the current structure and the functioning of the PSSA and if the institution has the resources to monitor to ensure that public funds amounting to Rs2.5 billion invested almost yearly only on salaries and not in grant-in-aid? Do the resources that this institution has respond or do we need to have a serious look at the whole functioning? May I also know if the Board has already been constituted?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Board has been constituted, Madam Speaker. As far as the quality assurance is concerned, this has been transferred to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research; the Quality Assurance Unit is under my Ministry and is being run by officers of the Ministry.

As far as the money is concerned, the money that has been disbursed is in terms of emoluments of teachers as per the regulations, as per the PSSA Act.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: May I ask the hon...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, could you, please, be brief in your question?

Mr Rughoobur: Yes. May I ask the hon. Minister to, please, look into it because this institution has been the way it is since years? Could she, please, see to it that there is a full review of its functioning, in light of the development that we have today and in light of the huge sum of money that is being invested?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the PSSA Act is being reviewed and, obviously, the Ministry is looking into the matter and we are trying to see how best to adapt it to the current situation.

Mr Rughoobur: I believe the issue of *formation est important*. I know that we have got a series of institutions looking after *formation*. But still, I would request the hon. Minister, while looking into this whole structure which would probably be revisited, to ensure that in the new structure there is adequate attention given to this whole issue of *formation dans le secteur privé aussi*.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is being taken into account.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

STIMULUS PACKAGE - LEASING EQUIPMENT MODERNISATION SCHEME

(No. B/545) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to if –

- (a) it has been extended for the current financial year, and
- (b) any amount of leasing facilities approved by the Corporation is still due to leasing companies and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) total amount owed as at to date, and
 - (ii) expected dates on which the arrears will be paid.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) became operational in 2009 and the averred object was supposedly to provide money to large companies to acquire equipment on lease allegedly for the modernisation of their operations. This Scheme was part of what was called a Stimulus Package introduced by the then Government in the context of the then prevailing global economic crisis.

I am informed that, as at 31 December 2014, a total amount of Rs3.84 billion in favour of 1,058 enterprises has been approved by the Restructuring Working Group (RWG), a Committee set up under the National Resilience Fund (NRF) for disbursement by SIC.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the RWG has ceased to operate since December 2014 and no new applications are now being entertained.

With regard to part (b) of the question, out of the amount of Rs3.84 billion, an amount of Rs520 m. has still to be disbursed to the leasing companies.

The SIC is presently discussing with the leasing companies on the possibility for them to raise the capital amount from the domestic banking system in view of the excess liquidity situation instead of relying on funds from the NRF and on new modalities.

Mr Uteem: I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mention that the scheme has been stopped and that now SMEs are being directed to look for Commercial Banks. But this

scheme was set up precisely to help SMEs which could not raise finance from the banking system and that is the whole purpose of having this scheme. So, does that mean that henceforth the Government will no longer support SMEs by providing these leasing facilities?

Mr Collendavelloo: We all know that all this was window dressing by that Minister. We know whom the hon. Member is talking about!

(Interruptions)

No!

(Interruptions)

The Stimulus Package, it was not him!

(Interruptions)

Remember!

(Interruptions)

Let us not go into polemics! I am just telling the hon. Member that as a matter of fact, as from December 2014, the Restructuring Working Group has been disbanded. So, the question does not arise!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has mentioned the amount disbursed today. May I know whether he has the information as to whether there has been any default, any non-repayment?

Mr Collendavelloo: I don't have that information, but I know that big financiers took a lot of money and did not refund. This is public knowledge.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

STATE LAND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY - UNIVERSITIES - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/546) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the project for the construction of universities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Land Development Company Ltd., information as to -

(a) the amount of funds invested in relation thereto as at to date, indicating the -

- (i) names of the consultants and building contractors appointed therefor, and
 - (ii) completion dates of works thereof, and
- (b) if the company is exempted from the application of the provisions of the Public Procurement Act.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD - NATIONAL PORTAL - BIDDERS

(No. B/547) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the creation of the new national portal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information Communications Technology Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of funds invested therein, indicating the names of the bidders therefor, further indicating the price quoted in each case, and
- (b) if the successful bidder has strictly complied with the scope of services, as at to date and, if not, indicate the measures that are being envisaged against the latter.

Mr Bhadain: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Computer Board that the total amount of funds invested in the project for the creation of a new national portal, which I shall refer as the Government Portal, amounted to Rs57,532,247.39. The project was completed in December 2012.

Following a tender exercise, through the open advertised bidding and a two-envelope process, 10 bidders had submitted their proposals. They were as follows -

- (i) Anglo African Ltd.
- (ii) Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd (LCI)
- (iii) Africa Digital Bridges Networks Ltd (ADBN)
- (iv) *Formation Recrutement et Conseil en Informatique Ltée (FRCI)*
- (v) Harel Mallac Technologies (HMT)
- (vi) Catalyst Business Partners
- (vii) DCDM Consulting Ltd

- (viii) New Edge Solutions
- (ix) State Informatics Ltd (SIL)
- (x) Data Communication Ltd (DCL)

After the technical evaluation of the offers received, only two bids were found to be technically responsive and were retained for financial evaluation. The envelopes containing the financial offers of the eight bidders, who had failed the technical evaluation stage, were returned unopened to them.

The financial proposals of the two responsive bidders, namely 'Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd' (LCI) and '*Formation Recrutement et Conseil en Informatique Ltée*' (FRCI), were subsequently opened and their bid prices were as follows –

BIDDER	BID PRICE (incl of VAT)
LCI	Rs104,651,610.00
FRCI	Option 1: Rs55,145,680.00
	Option 2: Rs49,990,642.60

Following the financial analysis, the contract for the creation of a Government Portal was awarded to FRCI for a sum of Rs49,990,642.60, inclusive of VAT.

It is to be noted that during the project implementation, the following additional works were entrusted to the successful bidder, which I am informed was in compliance with the Public Procurement Act -

1. The Mauritius E-Gov Portal Mobile version amounting to Rs1,504,200, inclusive of VAT, and
2. Mauritius E-Gov framework payment gateway amounting to Rs6,037,404.79, inclusive of VAT.

The mobile version allows users to access the Government Portal through their mobile phones, whilst the e-payment gateway allows for online payment.

Taking into consideration the cost of the additional works, the total contract price turned out to be Rs57,532,247.39, that is, 15% over and above the original contract price which is within the statutory limit for contract variations, I am informed.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the contractor has complied with the scope of services which, *inter alia*, included the following -

- Supply of necessary hardware;
- Supply of necessary software;
- Networking;
- Portal solution;
- Portal technical architecture;
- Security solution;
- Scalability, operability and availability;
- Compliance with e-GIF (e-Government Interoperability Framework) standards;
- Training, and
- Post-implementation services.

The contract was signed on 09 November 2011 and delivery was effected on 03 December 2012, that is, within the 14-month time frame. The two additional items of contract variations, that is, the mobile version together with the e-payment gateway, were completed in December 2013.

I am further informed that the post-implementation services went well and that the contract has been completed without any problem, Madam Speaker.

Mr Rughoobur: The hon. Minister speaks of a sum of Rs57 m. approximately for the value of contract, while, the report of the Director of Audit speaks of a sum of almost Rs80 m. You have got a maintenance contract of Rs30 m. additional. May I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of this award of Rs30 m. for the maintenance contract? How was it awarded and whether the provisions of the Public Procurement Act were complied with?

Mr Bhadain: I am told that the provisions of the Public Procurement Act were indeed complied with and the information that I have been supplied regarding the details of how much was spent is as per the answer that I have given, but it is also true that I am chairing the Committee with all the Permanent Secretaries of all the Ministries regarding the recommendations made by the Director of Audit and I will certainly look into this matter in that Committee and if there are any issues which should be looked at, I will certainly look at those issues.

Mr Rughoobur: I believe the portal, as it is now, does not seem to satisfy the requirements of modern age. May I request the hon. Minister to please look into the whole matter and also to ensure that there is, if need be, an investigation on this whole issue of 57-80 million and the Director of Audit Report also speaks about the sum of Rs6 m. that has been spent on e-payment but, today, we can't access e-payment facility. I would request the

hon. Minister to please get a whole investigation in the whole issue and probably to report to this House later on.

Mr Bhadain: We will certainly look into that, Madam Speaker; the Committee is meeting tomorrow morning.

NATIONAL AIDS COMMITTEE

(No. B/548) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the National Aids Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) when the Committee last met, and
- (c) if the proposed discontinuation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme was discussed at the level thereof and, if so, table copy of the proceedings thereof in relation thereto.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (a) & (b) of the question, I am informed that the National Aids Committee, at its inception, was made up of the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the hon. Minister of Tourism and External Communications, the hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, the hon. Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, the hon. Attorney General, the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports and the Commissioner of Health Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the NGOs were the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Associations; PILS, *Vivre Plus*, *Action Familiale*, the Council of Religions, Media Watch Organisation, Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA). The Committee last met Madam Speaker, in April 2006.

Madam Speaker, as for part (c), the question does not arise as the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme has never been discontinued. Beneficiaries in the programme are still receiving their daily doses of Methadone.

Mr Baloomoody: So, do I understand that there is no National Aids Committee now? There is a National Aids Secretariat, I understand. Do we have a National Aids Committee? Because this is one of the protocols of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, that there should be a National Aids Committee and the hon. Prime Minister; the list of participants is not correct, there was in that list as well a Member backbencher of the Government and a Member of the Opposition when it was first instituted. So, can I ask from the hon. Minister whether we have a National Aids Committee now?

Mr Gayan: Well, as I have said, there is still a National Aids Committee, but it last met in 2006. The National Aids Secretariat has come to the Ministry of Health from the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Baloomoody: Do I take it that the National Aids Secretariat has taken over the works of the National Aids Committee?

Mr Gayan: My understanding is that the National Aids Committee still stays as an institution, but all the operational requirements of the National Aids Secretariat have gone to the Ministry of Health and that is where the work is being done.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the National Aids Secretariat, the hon. Minister has gone on record when saying that he is going to do with the supplies of methadone and the substitution thereof. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether with regard to the Secretariat this matter has been raised and discussed?

Mr Gayan: Well, the issue of methadone, Madam Speaker, has been a matter of consideration in my Ministry since this Government took over in December last year and we have had lots of meetings with the NGOs, with the experts working on the programme; I had myself had discussions with the WHO people and, in fact, we have a team of the WHO which is coming to review the whole programme and this is something which is of great interest to lots of people and we are doing the best we can in the circumstances. But let me say also that all those who are on the methadone treatment right now, which is about 4,700 and something, they are still being given their treatment as was the case before. However, modern research has shown that those who are on methadone addiction for long-term, develop all sorts of other complications and this is why, for those who want to join the programme, we have said: let us see if there are alternatives so that people do not become methadone addicted for life and this is what we are doing.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned that there have been several meetings. May I know when the last meeting was held with regard to the methadone issue at the National Aids Secretariat?

Mr Gayan: I don't have the date, but I have the details in the office.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the country report of the Aids Secretariat dated April 2015 where it is stipulated that, following the introduction of harm reduction strategies in 2006, that's when there was the National Aids Committee, namely the Needle Exchange Programme and the Methadone Substitution Therapy, the percentage of PWID - that is, People Who Inject Drugs - among detected cases decreased from 68.1% in 2011 to 42.2% in 2012, 38.1% in 2013 and in 2014, it was only 31.1%, showing clearly that the Methadone Substitution Therapy is working positively?

Mr Gayan: Well, Madam Speaker, if we travel back in time to 2006, that was the time when the HIV/AIDS epidemic was creating havoc not only in Mauritius but also in Africa. There were news items almost on a daily basis. Whole villages were destroyed because of HIV/AIDS. Today, that is no longer the case. There are new medicines on the market and then the ARV treatment was given to the HIV-positive people and that programme is still ongoing, but we do have some vulnerable groups. Obviously, there will be some vulnerable groups like men having sex with men, sex workers and all these are vulnerable groups. So, as a Government, and I as the Minister responsible for public health, have to adopt a holistic approach to this issue and this is what I am doing with the assistance of the WHO, with the assistance of the people attached to my Ministry.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Hon. Minister - if he is going back years - this is a report from your Ministry, from the Secretariat. There is no longer in National AIDS Committee, there is the AIDS Secretariat in your Ministry. Now, this is dated April 2015, sent to the United Nations, and it is all praise to both the methadone, which can be improved of course, but it is all praise for both the methadone programme and the syringe distribution system. This is a huge achievement which has reached in April from your Ministry and will you confirm that, in fact, the National AIDS Secretariat is not being taken on board adequately with the changes that are being envisaged?

Mr Gayan: I will certainly not subscribe to the last part of the question, but let me also say, Madam Speaker, we hear lots of things in this country and with regard to the Needle Exchange Programme; the whole purpose of the Needle Exchange Programme - I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows very well - was that I bring a used needle and I am given a new needle. That has not worked and this is why,...

(Interruptions)

Yes, that was dated April. I will give you the facts and the figures. The average amount of needles that were being used per month last year was about 10,000. In the month of May it reached 65,000. That's when I started asking questions and that's when the Minister became the target of criticisms and I will also say, Madam Speaker, that we read recently the premises of *CUT (Colletif Urgence Toxida)* - that is, the NGO responsible for needle exchange were burgled; information was lost, computers were lost. Then, as a responsible Minister, I am concerned. We are dealing with matters which are highly sensitive, people who are injecting drugs, who need treatment, because at the end of the day all these people who need treatment, end up in the hospitals and we need to give them the treatment available. What I am saying to this House is that I...

(Interruptions)

The National AIDS Committee is a different thing. The National AIDS Secretariat is with the Ministry and we are working with the National AIDS Secretariat to ensure that people who wish to join the programme of detox do not become dependent for life on methadone. I was just doing some research while waiting for this question, Madam Speaker, and it says that prolonged use of methadone causes changes in the mental framework of people. It has lots of side effects and this is what...

(Interruptions)

You have Google. Please Google, go on methadone and mental health. You will see all the information there. Methadone causes personality disorders.

(Interruptions)

This is why we need to have a look at alternatives. We cannot be wedded to a system that is not performing. We need to be open to new challenges.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have as well googled the Minister himself, and having googled the Minister, I have come across and connecting what the hon. Minister has stated today with what has been reported to have been said recently at the World Alzheimer's Month event that was organised recently and which the hon. Minister attended, where he said there - he is reported to have said, at least - that methadone is connected to the possibility of dementia and it is also connected to the possibility of Alzheimer. Now, methadone happens to be on the list of approved treatments by the World Health Organisation. Is the hon. Minister telling this House or is he telling the country that the World Health Organisation allows - on its approved list of drugs substitution therapy - methadone, at the same time knowing that it is something that can provoke dementia and can provoke Alzheimer, and if he has a report to that effect, if he could please give us, make us happy by tabling such a report that gives us conclusive evidence of his amazing discovery?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I will certainly place in the Library of the National Assembly research relating to mental disorders, psychiatric disorders of people on long-term methadone treatment. Research has also shown that psychiatric disorder is up to ten times higher in the population on long-term methadone maintenance therapy. So, it is not something that I am inventing. I am just saying what is scientifically proven.

Dr. Joomaye: Methadone substitution is partly funded by the *Fonds mondial*, the Global Fund. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will refuse the funding from this organisation because they fund Methadone and Needle Exchange Programme?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, the Global Fund deals with HIV, Malaria and TB. There are now attempts being made to expand the range of the Global Fund to cancer. There was a time when the Global Fund was giving a lot of money to Mauritius. Because we have become an emerging country with a relatively sound economy, the funds are not as significant as they used to be. We are talking to the Global Fund. We will certainly accept whatever amount is given, but we will be accepting the money on terms that meet the concerns of health in our country. Mauritius as a Sovereign State must reserve that right for itself.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Minister, even if he says that the methadone programme has not been discontinued, but in a certain sense newcomers will not be

dispensed with this treatment now, which means that it has been discontinued for newcomers who will come and seek treatment. Why has not the hon. Minister talked, dialogued with the social workers, with the different NGOs who have been very active concerning the fight against the drug addiction and rehabilitation?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I have spoken to them and, in fact, last Friday I was invited to pay a visit to the Headquarters of PILS and I had accepted the invitation. Then they decided to cancel the meeting. So, I am trying to arrange another meeting.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody! Next question! We have sufficiently discussed on this issue. Next question!

NINE YEAR CONTINUOUS BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/549) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Project, she will state how her Ministry is proposing to respond to the public concerns that -

- (a) it will lead to the introduction of an additional competitive high stake examination at the end of Year 9, and
- (b) the introduction of mixed schooling in existing single sex schools, to be renamed Academies, in Year 10, may result in serious management issues.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the Nine Year basic continuous schooling which is being introduced in the context of the reforms will bring in a transformation of our current educational structure and the accompanying measures are likely to usher in a systemic change. The new project aims at putting in place a system which eliminates cut-throat competition and undue stress. It will promote the holistic development of the child, inculcating in them the desired skills, knowledge and competencies to become 21st century citizens. Many education systems worldwide are adopting this trend. It is our duty as a caring Government to relieve our children and to give them back their childhood by creating the right conditions for their cognitive and integral development.

This is a holistic and integrated approach, Madam Speaker, which will involve a paradigm shift, a change in the mindset of people. The new assessment system will take on board not only the students' performance level but also their talents, aptitudes and attainments.

First of all, I wish to inform the House that the assessment at the end of Year 9 is already in place since 2010 by way of the National Form III assessment/exams. The nine-year schooling project is proposing an assessment to come up with the award of the National Certificate of Education (NCE).

This assessment aims at -

- measuring the attainment of the students at the end of the nine years of basic education, and
- promoting students to Grade 10 in their respective schools.

It will also be used for the purpose of admission of students opting for seats in Academies at Grade 10 level.

The NCE is thus not an additional examination given that it is already the practice for students of Form III to sit for the National Form III Assessment at their school at the end of the year. These examinations aim at assessing the learning outcomes of students and are also used for the purpose of promotion to Form IV and for the choice of subjects for Form IV and School Certificate. It will also help in the allocation of seats, as I said earlier, for students opting for Academies.

The current National Form III Assessment will therefore be replaced by the NCE in 2020 where there will be a national assessment in all subjects. The NCE will be organised by the MES which will also be responsible for the marking at the central level.

As already stated earlier, the NCE will not be a high stake examination. The reason is that students are already enrolled in a secondary school and will be able to pursue and complete their secondary education at the same school. The very fact that the students have already secured a seat in a Regional Secondary School, it will be a matter of choice for the student to decide whether he or she will opt for a seat in the Academies or not. The students will be mature enough to take a decision at this age.

I would like to draw the attention of the House that the NCE will also come up with innovative modes of assessment, namely the school based assessment where all students have the possibility of demonstrating and being assessed on talents other than the merely cognitive ones.

For the majority of them, the NCE will therefore serve the purpose of certification only. Furthermore, this reform wishes to bring in its wake a valorisation of the TVET with the state-of-the-art technology so that it becomes a pole of attraction for students. Hence, the NYS makes a case for different pathways and Academies are just one of those.

Madam Speaker, students remaining in their Regional Schools will have a further advantage of competing for both National and Regional Scholarships. The latter are not offered to students in Academies. Thus, the examinations at the end of Grade 9 cannot be considered as a high-stake competitive one inasmuch as the student is already enrolled in a secondary school where he has undergone 3 years of schooling.

His seat is guaranteed to pursue the remaining years of the upper secondary schooling. Opting for the Academies thus becomes purely a matter of choice.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I would like to remind the House that many of the Private Secondary Schools are mixed, and they have stood the test of time. We all know that co-education has been practised in many of our private secondary schools and the students have been performing well in all fields.

We have good examples to testify, namely, the MGI Secondary School, the MGSS schools, St Andrews, among others, have a good track record of mixed schooling whether in terms of discipline, performance or adaptability as well as parents' acceptability. There have been no serious management issues reported till date in these schools. Co-education is known to have a positive effect, enhancing not only performance, but also the development of sound interpersonal skills. That being said, mixed schooling is not a new phenomenon. Currently, pupils are already evolving in harmony in co-education environment in the pre-primary and primary subsectors. A similar condition prevails at the technical and vocational schools and at the Tertiary Education Sector, not to mention the private tuition classes which have been operating thus for years.

Madam Speaker, it is worthwhile noting that we are preparing the students for the world of work and for life. In this natural endeavour, if boys and girls are instructed in a co-

education environment, it will facilitate transition and integration in their workplace and in their adult life.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, time is nearly over. Do you have a long statement?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am ending, just a last sentence. Furthermore, co-education schools provide the opportunity to make gender mainstreaming a reality in our schools and provides for the same facilities for boys and girls following the same curriculum. The hon. Member may rest assured that regarding Academies, all necessary facilities will be made available in terms of infrastructure, special rooms, special facilities for either group and all regional schools are operating as single-sex institutions, as such we retain the gender specificity.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer, but, unfortunately, there is still some confusion outside with regard to the CPE because looking at the document which was circulated when we attended the Minister's invitation, the criteria for admitting students to Grade 7 - so, we are talking about those who are leaving Standard VI. There are three criteria: parental choice, but the second one: overall grading at the Primary School Achievement Certificate which is now replacing the CPE examinations. So, it is clear that that examination will have an impact on the future of the child. So, he will still be competing one way or the other before going to Grade 7.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: To start with, Madam Speaker, let me say straightaway that the National Schools will not be admitting students at Grade 7 level. Students will be moving on to Grade 7 in all regional schools. So, first of all, competition is reduced at this level only.

Secondly, when we talk about the criteria for admission in Secondary Schools, it is clear that we are going to take overall grading which means that there will not be any A+ nor very acute sort of progression from one level to the other. All students will be admitted into Grade 7 after Grade 6, no matter what their results are as far as the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) examination is concerned. All students will move on to Grade 7, but the admission will be done on a regional basis as it is done right now for regional schools depending on the students' results, the proximity of the residence to the school opted for and the priority of the parents.

Mr Baloomoody: We have many local schools. So, how will one choose to which school this child will go if we are not going to take into account the overall grading at the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is going to be the way it is done for regional schools right now, that is, according to the demand of the parents, the priority list, the proximity to the place and also the results of the students, but there will be no sort of ranking of students, no marks concerned; let's say that if we say for 'A', if we are talking about A's or whatever the grading system would be, it will be the same for all students having it. They will be able to enter the school depending on the proximity of their residence to the school.

Mr Baloomoody: Now, with regard to the academic schools...

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Academies!

Mr Baloomoody: The Academies, are we in one way or the other keeping, what we call, the Star Schools where we have all the best talented teachers?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, the attribution or rather the way teachers will move from one school to the other would be the same as it is today. So, there will be no special teachers for special schools. All the Academies will admit students only at Grade 10, which means that the students will have the choice of going to an Academy or not and the Academies will be schools of excellence in areas. *C'est-à-dire*, they will have schools with certain specialism, with certain specialist areas, schools for Science, schools for Arts, etc, but there will be no sort of star schools as such. Students will be admitted according to their performance at level of grade 10.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the exams...

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Baloomoody: Sorry, Madam Speaker. It is of national interest this question. With regard to the Standard Form III Exam which will be run by the MES, up to now, according to my information from those who are in the sectors, the MES, itself, is not aware how to run this exam, what will be the syllabus, how it will be run?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is totally not true. The MES is working. We have got eight different implementation committees, the MES is working on that and the MES....

(Interruptions)

No, the MES has been working earlier. Now, we are talking about the nine year schooling with the NCE exams which will be held in 2020 and the MES is now working with other partners at the Ministry for the implementation of the NCE exams in 2020.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/550, B/551, B/553 and B/561 have been withdrawn.

Hon. Members, in the course of the Private Notice Question today, after hon. Rutnah had put a supplementary question, hon. Uteem rose on a point of order to the effect that hon. Rutnah had made a serious allegation of bribery against the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I asked hon. Rutnah as to whether he had uttered words of that nature and he stated that he had not made any such allegation from a standing position. I had undertaken to listen to the recording and come back to the House. I have to inform the House that I did listen to the recording which reveals that hon. Rutnah had uttered the following words from a sitting position, and I quote -

“Tone bribe dimoune”.

The above words amount to serious allegation against the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I, therefore, request hon. Rutnah to kindly withdraw these words.

Mr Rutnah: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: I also have to inform the House that hon. Baloomoody has uttered the word ‘batchara’.

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please, don’t start again!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please! Don’t provoke!

(Interruptions)

Can I continue?

I also have to inform the House that hon. Baloomoody has uttered the word ‘batchara’ and I also request him to kindly withdraw this word.

Mr Baloomoody: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that any unparliamentary word, offensive words and allegations towards hon. Members, even from a

sitting position, is not in order and does not add dignity to the decorum of the House. I, therefore, appeal to hon. Members to maintain the decorum of the House. Thank you.

Mr Gayan: On a point of order, Madam. I just wish to seek your guidance, is the word ‘*roquet*’ parliamentary?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I just said that we should refrain! Hon. Members should refrain from using unparliamentary words. It is not good for the dignity of the House and it is not good for the decorum of the House. So, I, once again, appeal to all of you to refrain from using those sorts of words.

PAILLES – TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

(No. B/550) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Treatment Plant Project at Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the –

- (a) cost thereof, indicating the amount of variation costs;
- (b) date on which it will become operational, and
- (c) outcome of any inquiry carried out in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

APOLLO BRAMWELL HOSPITAL – ACQUISITION

(No. B/551) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Apollo Bramwell Hospital, he will state the –

- (a) funds that have been used for the acquisition thereof;
- (b) procedures that have been followed for the acquisition thereof, and
- (c) monthly income and expenditure thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.32 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.10 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE MAURITIUS RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY BILL

(No. XI of 2015)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency Bill (No. XI of 2015).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

(5.10 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, the piece of legislation in front of us today is of utmost importance for our future generation. The Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency Bill has as main object the establishment of an agency for the promotion and the use of renewable energy and we go along with the setting-up of such an agency which was long overdue.

In his speech, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities gave examples of countries where such agencies have been established, for example, in India, Australia, Denmark and other countries, Madam Speaker. Today, we have to acknowledge that renewable energy plays an important role. It offers the world a unique opportunity to curb carbon emissions and, in doing so, we slow down the climate change. We also reduce our dependence on fossil fuel and strengthen our energy security. But the most

important thing is that it safeguards our country against price instability of petroleum products.

Let us have an outlook of the global energy status. When one goes through the speech of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, we note that he has not given us figures of what the situation is worldwide, but even in our country. Let me give some figures on the global energy status, figures which have been published by REN21. REN21, Madam Speaker, is a global Renewable Energy Policy Network based at UNEP in Paris. Figures have shown that global energy installations were very successful in 2014 and have proved today that they have decoupled economic growth and energy use from the energy sector greenhouse emissions.

Figures for 2015 show that the sector is still resilient even with a decrease in price of fuel. Renewable energy accounted for more than 59% of all new electricity generating capacity installed worldwide during 2014. Renewable energy targets and support policies are now in place in 164 countries around the world. Global carbon emissions associated with energy consumption remained stable in 2014 - we should note that - despite an increase of 1.5% in energy production and a global GDP growth of 3%. It is important to understand that this dissociation between the economic growth and carbon emissions is attributed to the increased penetration of renewable energy and improvements in energy efficiency.

In 2014, over 135GW of renewable energy capacity was added, out of which 128GW came from wind PV, that is, photovoltaic and hydro. The total installed capacity of renewable energy worldwide is now 1712GW, that is, an increase of 8.5% from 2013 which is enough to supply an estimated 22.8% of global energy and, that too, where renewables have faced policy challenges. For example, Madam Speaker, in Europe they have imposed new taxes on renewable energy and in the US they have faced the expiration of tax credit. Even that, with these two issues that I have mentioned, the global electricity energy, that is, the share of renewable energy in the global electricity of the world has been of the order of 22.8%.

It is also important to note that certain renewable energy technologies have experienced a very rapid growth in 2014. For example, today solar and wind power are the leading technologies in terms of investment. Solar PV accounted for more than 55% of new investment and wind power 36.8%.

Having said that with regard to the situation of renewable energy worldwide, let me get to what the situation is in Mauritius and that is why I have said that the hon. Minister

responsible for Public Utilities should, during his speech, give us figures so that we can analyse what the present situation is because when I'll be referring to reports that are being made public, I'll have to go back to 2007 when the outline strategy for the energy sector was made public. Based on that outline strategy, a study was carried out to support the long-term vision over a period of 15 years, to include also a master plan for the energy sector. The final report was adopted in 2008, it was made public in 2009 and this is the referral document for the energy sector. After that, there was no master plan that was made public and it is not clear today what is the medium to long-term strategy for the energy sector. Now, allow me, Madam Speaker, to refer to that report that was made public in 2009 with regard to renewable energy. One of the most important recommendations of that report was to develop a master plan for renewable energy. When it was published in 2009, it was said that we should have that master plan by the end of 2010. We are today in 2015, we do not have a master plan for the renewable energy sector. Apart from that, it also stated that we should look into increasing the contribution of based bagasse electricity in the medium term from 350 GW hours to 600 GW hours annually, and this also has not been done.

There were other recommendations, Madam Speaker, with regard to renewable energy being produced from solar PV and wind and I shall dwell with that later on. But the main recommendations that were made in that document targeted the potential of renewable energy sources. Two Tables were published, one in that very document which is dated October 2009 and the same Table was reproduced in a document submitted by the Central Electricity Board in 2013 and stated the following. It stated that –

“The share of renewable energy in 2025 would be of the order of 35%...”

“From 24% ...” - where we are today, actually it is 20%. I will explain why.

“From 24% where we are today to 35% ...”

This included –

“...electricity being produced from bagasse, electricity being produced from hydro, electricity being produced from waste to energy ...”

That is the waste-to-energy project which has never been implemented - never started.

Then –

“The share of wind energy and the share of solar PV and last the share of geothermal energy”.

The increase over that period is stated, but we need today to correct this Table. When I refer to the share PV, I wonder whether I am referring to exact figures, whether we are going to attain that 35% in 2025, time only will tell, Madam Speaker, because we are very far from the figure that has been put into that Table.

Now, if one goes to the website of IEA, that is, the International Energy Agency or the IRENA, that is, the International Renewable Energy Agency, we have an indication of what the situation is in Mauritius from 2009 to 2012 because these are the only figures that we have from those two agencies and it shows that. In 2009, with the introduction of the *MID* concept, the share of renewable energy was of the order of 609 GW hours. In 2010, with the introduction of the feed in tariff that share rose to 654 GW hours. But then, in 2011, it decreased to 552 GW hours and in 2012 it was 579 GW hours, that is, almost a decrease of 10% after the introduction of the *MID* concept.

What is the situation today? What are the figures of renewable energy in 2013 and 2014? Is it still on the decrease, is it stable or is it increasing? I would wish the hon. Minister to comment any figures that are unavailable - to share the figures with us. Now, the hon. Minister, in his speech, mentioned the expression of interest that was launched by the Central Electricity Board recently to test the market appetite with regard to those who would wish to invest in renewable energy. He informed us that - at that time when he made his speech - the Central Electricity Board had received 260 proposals for a total of 1,500 megawatts, but I think the figures vary because I read an interview of the General Manager of the Central Electricity Board the figures were different with regard to the proposals received and to the capacity also. Now, we were also told that there was a wide diversity of technology, but we understand that we are only the first phase of the project, from the expression of interest we have to move to (RFP) that is the Request for Proposal, and then go through a tender exercise. So, it will take us some time before decisions are taken with regard to who are those who will set up renewable energy projects in the country.

The issue of absorption capacity of the grid was also stated and, here, I would wish to make a few comments. I think the hon. Minister, himself, in his speech, stated that CEB cannot anymore be judge and party in the energy sector, and I agree to that statement because they are operating in a situation of monopoly and are in full control of the generation,

distribution and the sale of electricity to consumers. It is of utmost importance, Madam Speaker, that we have a regulator. I do not understand why - not for the present Government - it has taken, and it is taking so much time to find somebody to head that Regulatory Authority.

I have come across documents where Government had launched tenders, applications to recruit the services of experts to assist in the setting-up and operationalisation of the Utility Regulatory Authority and that goes back in 2009. I have even come across an advertisement for the recruitment of a Chairperson for the Utility Regulatory Authority and when you have a look at the qualifications or experience that the candidate should have, for example, a university degree, with not less than five years proven professional, academic and managerial experience in the provision of any utility service, I don't find why it is so difficult to find such a person. I think it is high time because when we go back in time, that piece of legislation, I think, was presented as far back as in 2004 by my colleague, hon. Ganoo. It was amended in 2009. We are now in 2015 and still that regulator is not operational. When you have a look at the objects of that Authority, that Authority - as it is in the legislation - should protect the interests of both existing and future customers; promote competition to prevent unfair and anti-competitive practices in the utility services industry. That is why I think we should move very fast in finding someone to head that Authority and make it operational.

Now, let me get to an important point which I want to underline. When the hon. Minister talked about absorption capacity of the grid, we understand that the Central Electricity Board, as judge and party, is carrying out studies on its network, whether it is the low voltage network, the medium voltage network or the high voltage network in order to find out what is the absorption capacity of those networks, the capacity to absorb renewable energy. One question we should ask ourselves - true it is that with regard to generation, that is, the engines producing electricity, it belongs to the CEB, if I may put it this way. When it comes to the high tension lines, that is, lines of the order of 132 kV or 60 kV, let us say it belongs to the Central Electricity Board, but when we come to the medium voltage, when we come to the low voltage network, it is not the sole domain of the Central Electricity Board. And I explain myself; today when somebody wants to extend a network, say, for example, a customer wants to have the low voltage network extended to his premises, he is the one who pays for that. If a commercial consumer, if an industrial consumer wants the network to be extended to his premises to supply him with electricity, he pays for that.

Now, the fundamental question is: is the grid the sole domain of the Central Electricity Board? No, I don't think so. If studies are to be carried out with regard to the absorption capacity, all those stakeholders have to be consulted and I think this will be the way forward if we really want a good penetration of the renewable energy on our grid. That is why I would request the hon. Minister, first, to look urgently into getting that Regulatory Authority operational and to have a close look at whatever report will come with regard to the absorption capacity of the grid.

Today, we know, Madam Speaker, we have been able to surmount what we call technical barriers or economic barriers and that too, with the help - and we have to say it in this House - of foreign institutions, for example, *l'AFD*, UNDP, they have been very helpful in getting us to get the necessary Consultants to be able to overcome those barriers. That is, the technical barrier which has told us today that, technologies that are there in the renewable energy sector are becoming more efficient, more cost-effective and more accessible.

I made mention of the *MID* concept. Allow me to say a few words on this concept. Madam Speaker, it was back in 2008 that this concept was introduced. It is a sort of framework that operates on the taxation of fossil fuel to subsidise renewable energy projects. Later, they extended it to sustainable projects. It was based on a levy on the price structure of petroleum products. Initially, it was of the order of 15% and in November 2010, it was increased to 30%. As at September 2013, the amount collected stood at more than Rs1 billion. We have a list of projects that was tabled in this House and projects which were implemented under the *MID* concept.

I will not go into details of these projects, but there are some 24 projects over a span of four years that were implemented under the *MID* concept. I had put many questions in this House and I am saying what I said before. The then Minister responsible for the dossier of *MID* did not have the drive to push that project forward. We wasted a lot of time and the former Minister did not show any willingness to advance the cause of renewable energy in our country. Instead, what we did was to use opaque procedures to implement projects related to renewable energy. We are aware that at that time a negotiating panel was set up at the Central Electricity Board and the role of that panel was to consider large-scale unsolicited renewable energy projects and it was at that committee that approved that famous Sarako project in Bambous, an unsolicited bid. I hope that that committee does not exist anymore at the Central Electricity Board.

Now, there are other projects that were introduced to promote renewable energy and one project was based on the democratisation process which was advocated by the previous Government. We had the IPPs and they named that project SIPP, that is, the Small Independent Power Producers which was later on called SSDG and MSDG, that is, Small Scale Distributed Generation and Medium Scale Distributed Generation. This allowed a lot of people to produce electricity, residential consumers mostly, to produce electricity for their own consumption and export any excess electricity to the grid.

In the wake of that development, a Grid Code was adopted. That Grid Code defines all the relevant requirements for an individual to produce electricity from the operation, performance, testing, safety and maintenance of the installation. And the most important tool that was developed by that time was the feed-in tariff which is an essential tool for the promotion of renewable energy. The feed-in tariff was for a period of 15 years, that was during the first phase and we had tariff for electricity produced from wind, hydro and PV. When the first phase was launched, it was for a quota of 2 MW and it is interesting to note that the full 2 MW was used. At that time, CEB had received some 212 applications; 172 residential applications and 40 commercial applications, and today those consumers are producing electricity. Because that one was full, a second window was opened later on for a capacity of 2.9 MW and for that second window, 341 applications were received: 280 residential and 61 commercial. Both Windows were related to the feed-in tariff which is very attractive actually.

Later on, we had a third window, but that was meant exclusively for public, educational, charitable and religious institutions, that is, if we see the share of those small producers, it amounted to some 6.8 MW. It was very successful, but there were a few problems and we should be careful now with the new scheme that is being introduced by the Central Electricity Board. It was noted that there was a lack of expertise which resulted in the poor performance of the system. No proper designs or calculations were done. I'll give you one example. If you go at the Municipality of Port Louis, they have installed PV system. They are producing electricity for their own consumption and selling excess to the Central Electricity Board. As it is today, I don't think they are selling excess. There is no excess to be sold to the Central Electricity Board. That is why I am saying we should be very careful for the next window that this is given due consideration.

Then, there is that legal proclamation to be able to export to the grid. That proclamation should be signed by the President of the Republic. It is time that we change that because it is a very tedious exercise to obtain that approval. I am happy to hear that this is going to be changed.

Now, another problem that we might be facing in the future, *il y a un engouement* and it is clear, when you have a look today at the newspaper, you see a lot companies advertising for such systems. It is good that there is competition, but it should be fair and we should have value for money. We should not be in a situation where we have to face problems that we faced with suppliers of solar water heater systems. Again, there were questions in this House and it took us time to get the crooks - if I may say - out of the system. It is important that business companies in the field of renewable energy should be certified and accredited. That should be the role of that renewable agency. Then, I believe we will not face such problems.

In this window, CEB has come forward not with the feed-in tariff this time, but with what is called net metering. In the feed-in tariff, the prices are pre-defined, but in the net metering system, credits on electricity will be banked. The surplus of electricity, it is stated and I think they have to correct on the website of the CEB. I refer to the website of the CEB. Let me make my comments first and then I will see what has to be corrected! It is stated that the surplus energy banked into the grid may be set off against payment only upon closing of the account. This Government, through the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, has introduced a very attractive measure by allowing a person who installs such a system to recoup the cost through a relief in tax payment, which has made this very attractive. This will be done every year. Now why can't CEB, instead of making the payment only upon closing of the account, we do not know when the person, the prosumer – not the consumer the prosumer, who is producing electricity, will close his account. Why is it that CEB cannot pay that person? I am not saying on a monthly basis, maybe on a quarterly basis or on a yearly basis. That person, who has invested in such a system, who is producing electricity and supplying it to the grid, would wish, at least, to see the money he gets out from producing that electricity. That is why I think we should have a fresh look at that aspect of the net metering system. I said it earlier, it is not today. We have a legislation, we have an Act. It is not for the CEB to decide such things. It is for the regulator to decide on such issues, Madam Speaker.

Now, we understand that the target is for 2,000 consumers and I think people will queue up to be able to produce such electricity. Correction that I wanted to make. In the official document from the Central Electricity Board, at page 3, it is stated that part of the initial investment, 15% only for solar energy unit can be recouped through a relief in tax payment. Why is it only for solar energy unit? It should be for renewable energy units. In the legislation that we voted in this House, it was not stated that it has to be for this technology only? It is stated here that it is only for the solar energy unit. Maybe we should also have a fresh look at this aspect and bring the necessary corrections.

Now, let me get to a very delicate issue. We are voiting a piece of legislation that would put in place an agency called the Mauritius Renewable Agency which is going to be spearheaded by a Director. We also have what we call an Energy Efficiency Management Office headed again by a Director.

Madam Speaker, the trend worldwide is to try to combine those two, that is, renewable energy and energy efficiency. In doing so, we will save a lot of public money. I believe that, in due course, instead of having two agencies or two offices, we should have only one office, that is, one office looking after renewable energy and looking also after energy efficiency with one Director at the Head of that institution.

There are a few comments that I would wish to make on the Energy Efficiency Management Office where certain important issues have not been tackled until now. We were supposed to publish Energy Efficiency Regulations with regard to electrical appliances. This has not been done. It has to be made mandatory, this has not been done.

We were supposed also to carry out energy audits. This is being carried out, I understand, on a pilot scale, but we have to make it mandatory for certain industries and commercial premises and I think we should move fast on those two issues.

The last item that I would wish to comment is LNG. I think others have said it before me. LNG is not a form of renewable energy. The definition is clear. Where I find it uneasy is that tomorrow if you see you belong to an international organisation, when they will have a look at your piece of legislation and you would have included LNG into a legislation where we are dealing with renewable energy. I do not think this should be in this piece of legislation.

To conclude, let me say a few words on COP21 and a brief history of what the situation is and what is expected from COP21 which will be held in Paris, in December, this

year. Now, the international political response to climate change, Madam Speaker, began at the Rio Summit in 1992, where the Rio Convention included the adoption of the UN Framework on Climate Change. This Convention set out a framework for action at stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which entered into force on 21 March 1994, now has a near universal membership of 195 parties. This December, COP21 will, for the first time in over 20 years of UN Negotiations, aim to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate with the aim of keeping global warming below two degrees. Let us, Madam Speaker, here, in our small Mauritius, contribute significantly.

To end, I wish to quote former US Vice-President, Al Gore, when he made his speech in July 2008. I quote –

“There are times in the history of our nation when our very way of life depends upon dispelling illusions and awakening to the challenge of a present danger. In such moments, we are called upon to move quickly and boldly to shake off complacency, throw aside old habits and rise, clear-eyed and alert, to the necessity of big changes. Those who, for whatever reason, refuse to do their part must either be persuaded to join the effort or asked to step aside.”

A bon entendeur, salut!

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dayal!

(5.58 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr R. Dayal): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, hon. Collendavelloo, for the timely introduction of the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency Bill that provides for the institutional framework for promoting the development and use of renewable energy. I am convinced that this long-awaited dedicated agency for renewable energy will greatly contribute to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel and decouple our economic growth from carbon emissions.

Mauritius is blessed by Mother Nature with an ideal geographical location and geological assets with a huge potential of renewable energy sources. These should play a more important role in the country’s energy mix. We are blessed with sun, wind, land mass

and the sea. Indeed, the House will note that Mauritius has the privilege to benefit from more than 2,900 hours of sunlight per year and the South-East Trade winds and the Malagasy winds blow over the island for respectively 10 and 2 months. The sea also opens up the possibility of marine and tidal power.

Indeed, the sea can provide us with an opportunity to develop an air conditioning cooling system to drive our homes, offices, industries and hotels. We, in Mauritius, already have plentiful natural lagoons and we should only be making good use of them. Opportunities to tap geothermal energy should be explored.

I had the privilege of meeting the Director of Gaia, Ms Nonaka Tomoya, former Minister of Environment of Japan during my visit to India where during a workshop session there was a presentation of the Okinawa OTEC (Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Power Plant). The station is the first of its kind in the world creating energy in a clean manner. The mineral which deep sea water is utilised by the Plant can be used in a variety of industries making the entire process more efficient and beneficial. The plant construction and development have been part of a continuing dialogue between Kume Island Okinawa and the National Energy Laboratory of Hawaii together with the Saga Universities Institute of Ocean Energy.

The technology for generating power from the deep sea water already exists. At the Kumejima Island located in the very south of Japan and part of the Okinawa Islands, the Japanese Government has implemented a power plant for generating up to 50KW - and this is only one plant - of electricity from deep sea water. The plant's main role is power generation. Power is generated by the variations provided by the warm surface water 28.7⁰ C and the deep cold sea water 8.6⁰ C.

The sea water is used for several purposes such as cooling, energy generation, aquaculture and the production of drinking water, salts and cosmetics. Correctly, the deep water-based industries at Kumejima generate an annual turnover of USD20 million. which is 25% of the island's Gross National Product.

Here, I would like to come back to the intervention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition where he stated, and I quote –

“(...) we will kill electricity production through bagasse (...)”

And,

« *Ne comptez pas sur l'industrie sucrière pour investir des milliards in better boilers and efficient boilers and so on. Forget about it.*»

As the Minister responsible for the granting of EIA certificate for the production of energy in Mauritius, I would like to highlight that renewable energy, through the use of bagasse, is a reality and will continue to be so as a reliable clean biomass.

In fact, Government has already renewed the licence of Alteo for production of electricity and the company is planning to reduce the use of coal by 20%. On the other hand, an EIA licence has been granted to Omnicane for production of energy for the first time using sugarcane leaves, including bagasse. In so doing, the sugarcane planters are guaranteed higher revenue after sugarcane plantation in the context of dwindling sugarcane prices in the international market.

Geothermal energy is also used at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) Retreat Complex at Gual Pahari, India. By way of underground Earth Air Thermal system, air is heated in winter and cooled in summer instead of using fossil fuel for the air conditioning system. I met Dr. R. K. Pachauri, the Nobel Prize winner for peace for collaborative effort on this field and he was agreeable and even dispatched somebody for a facility in our Ministry.

In Mauritius also the Hypertek Hotel at Grand Bay uses geothermal energy for its air conditioning system. Sea water at a temperature of 10⁰ - 14⁰C is pumped and passed through chillers to further cool same to 5⁰ C. The cold water is then, by way of the piping network, passed to the air conditioning systems in guest rooms for cooling purposes. This is a reality in Mauritius!

All these sources of renewable energy should be at the forefront of research and development as advocated in the Bill. This is why the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is coming with the Bill. A similar scheme has been announced by the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, on the Swansea tidal lagoon project. The outcome of this research and development will no doubt support us to attract green investment opportunities.

Madam Speaker, we have enormous renewable energy potential, but the Silo approach has been for too long one of the barriers to its proper development. We need a coordinated and lateral mechanism as is being provided under the Bill and that will ensure a

synergistic approach to the development of renewable energy. It is only by having greater coordination that we can unlock the renewable energy potential of this country.

The Agency that is being set up will provide a platform to address the environmental, social and economic aspects associated with the development of renewable energy, including Waste-to-Energy Projects. I can say that we are going for Waste-to-Energy Project and just in one place, in Mare Chicose, we are going to produce, just with one factory, something like 20GW per hour and getting rid of the landfill site of Mare Chicose which has become an environmental hazard as soil leachate can give rise to underwater contamination. Only Mare Chicose can generate, as I said, more than 10GW per hour. And with about four of our transfer stations using about 100,000 tonnes of waste, we can again multiply the effect. With 100,000 tonnes, we can produce something like 15GW of energy which can help us to attain neutral emission and we already have promoters! We already have projects! We just have to wait for the agency to study and evaluate all those projects. There is a possibility to install along the coastal areas in shallow lagoons a massive network of wind generating power plants producing more than enough energy to sustain our energy development plan. It will also open and widen up the market for Renewable Energy Technologies, thereby promoting a widespread utilisation of renewable energy. This will not only ensure the sustainability of our energy sources and protect our environment but, may, in the long-term, lower prices for consumers.

I would like to reiterate the fact that our geology and topography can sustain the development of small, medium and large scale hydro power stations. We only have to look towards Scotland - I have seen it with my naked eyes and my son is actually piloting the greatest project of renewable energy in the whole world in Scotland – where in the Tummel and Conon Valley the same water is used up to three times to generate power through a number of hydro schemes. The scheme would not have been possible if they did not have a strategy and coordinate approach. This is what our Vice-Prime Minister is opting for. We can aspire to same types of schemes with this Bill.

Mauritius carried out an assessment on its needs for environmentally sound technologies to address climate change mitigation in the energy, transport and waste sectors as well as with agriculture, forests and other land use, water resources and the coastal zone to enhance adaption potential. The assessment clearly indicated that Mauritius presents an environment conducive for successful technology transfer to combat climate change and its

impacts. Existing barriers were identified and can be quite easily overcome with the support of the international community. Already, Mauritius is promoting cleaner technologies with its capability to guarantee sustainable development. The assessment also identified some key factors preventing technology transfer to cope with climate change such as inadequate integration of climate issues in long-term development plans, policies and strategies and insufficient institutional synergies. It is, therefore, clear that the existing enabling environment has to be enhanced for further development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Technology transfer remains nonetheless a delicate and difficult issue, namely because of Intellectual Property Rights and the usually high costs often associated with them. I am sure that the Green Climate Fund to the tune of 100 billion dollars can support Mauritius initiatives and I am already having talks with those concerned for transfer of technology on the core. Mauritius has, so far, resorted to mechanisms such as grants, bilateral and multilateral agreements, soft loans and private finance initiatives such as the IPPs (Independent Power Producers) on an ad-hoc basis for the transfer of technologies. I am pleased to note that one of the core functions of the Agency would be to define a funding strategy for renewable energy projects. I am confident that the Agency will play a key role in addressing the constraints encountered so far in the diffusion and uptake of new technologies. Already in Mauritius Alteo is proposing a reduction of 20% of its consumption of coal with more input of biomass and increasing by two fold its production of energy. The same philosophy has guided Omnicane to incorporate the use of biomass in the form of cane leaves for increasing its production of electricity. My Ministry in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders is proposing to use Arundo Donax which will be grown in waste land for the production of pellets as biomass in the production of electricity.

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, the electricity sector and its infrastructure are highly vulnerable -

- (a) Stronger cyclones and other extreme weather conditions, like lightning and torrential rainfall;
- (b) Decrease in global rainfall amount which lead to a decrease in hydro-power generation, and

- (c) Sea-level rise which may affect the two major fuels oil power stations and coastal networks infrastructure.

However, these vulnerabilities can be properly mitigated through a comprehensive renewable energy strategy where we can focus on such sources where we have comparative advantage. Moreover, Budget 2015, no doubt, gives the right incentive to upscale the share of renewables in the energy mix as it provides for a Solar Energy Investment Allowance Scheme thus, allowing a household investing in his own solar energy to deduct from his taxable income and total amount invested in such a unit that comprise photovoltaic kits and battery for storage of electricity.

Madam Speaker, the House will recall the eager response of the population to the new Solar Water Heater Scheme currently being implemented by my Ministry. To date, the scheme is in the fourth phase and so far, for the first time a total of 74,000 households has benefited from it.

My Ministry is planning, provided funds are available, to equip a solar water heater freely to the 160 new housing units of the National Housing Development Corporation (NHDC) for vulnerable people.

I am delighted to inform the House that this scheme is meeting its intended objectives to -

- (a) Encourage the use of renewable energy instead of fossils fuels;
- (b) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- (c) Assist the long-term development of the solar water heater industry, and
- (d) Increase public access to and create awareness of sustainable energy technology.

Furthermore, we are not only addressing renewable energy at the level of power production in the National CEB grid, we are also addressing renewable energy at the level of logistics, smart means of transportation by having electric buses with the life span of 25 years with 100 seated capacity, with five-year pay back capacity and life span of 12 years for its batteries, thus reducing our dependence on fossil fuel.

Madam Speaker, the energy industries (electricity generation) is one of the main sources of GHG emissions within the energy sector. Computations indicate that during the

period 2000 to 2006, net GHG emissions rose to 16.8% from 3,914 GIGA CO₂ equivalent to 4,572 GIGA CO₂ equivalent with an annual average increase of 2.7%. It is, therefore, in the interest of Mauritius to contribute to the reduction of GHG, be it in an infinitely small amount and we are committed to this objective.

I therefore welcome the mitigating measures being envisaged for the electricity sector, namely for the Central Electricity Board to switch from heavy fuel oil to the less carbon intensive fuel, the Liquefied Natural Gas. It is expected that Liquefied Natural Gas is readily available as the world natural gas proven reserves is estimated at 204.7 trillion cubic meters and in our region. Recently, huge reserves of gas have been discovered in Egypt.

Madam Speaker, according to the 5th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) Assessment Reports (released in November 2014), the world is heading towards a dangerous climate change pathway and urgent actions are required. At the 19th Conference of Parties, UNFCCC in 2013, Parties agreed to formulate and communicate to the UNFCCC Secretariat measures they intend to take at their respective national level to both mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts in the form of an Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) and here I must salute the collaboration of the Ministry of Energy and the Deputy Prime Minister together with all line Ministries and line Ministers who helped in the implementation of INDC which will be made public very shortly.

INDCs are contributions that countries make towards achieving one of the main objectives of the UNFCCC Convention, that is, to limit the temperature rise to below 2⁰ C by 2100.

The INDC mitigation and adaption diagnosis comprise –

- (a) Data and information to be collected regarding climate change mitigation which may include national objectives and priorities, future and current GHG emissions, on-going mitigation activities, mitigation potential, relation towards the 2⁰ C goal, and the financing needed to reach the potential reduction;
- (b) Data to be collected regarding adaption may include current and future climate scenario, current and future vulnerability, on-going and expected adaptation strategies, adaption plans and policies, as well as financial needs.

The INDC document will be finalised and submitted to the UNFCCC at the end of September 2015, prior to the Climate Change Conference taking place in Paris in December 2015 and, for the first time, we are taking part - our delegation - and somebody from the private sector

as well. This crucial document can be used to mobilise resources, both financial and technical, to support us in our quest to decarbonise our development.

This Bill is, therefore, coming at an opportune time and will assist us in developing linkages both at regional and international levels.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to inform the House that our waste management strategy lays strong emphasis on tapping the energy potential from residual waste. Such an approach will not only enable electricity generation but will also result in diverting waste from landfill, thus, allowing savings in terms of landfilling space and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We are spending billions for so many years.

However, the debate around energy recovery from waste can often be highly emotive. It is a complex area that is not easily or effectively addressed with a simple “it’s a right” or “it’s a wrong” approach. Similar to Singapore, we should encourage the use of the fuel source. Energy recovery from waste must, at the very outset, not compete with recycling, reuse and prevention initiatives, but should ideally support them. There are many subtleties and proposals that need to be debated, using all the available evidence, and with due consideration of the wider environmental impact of managing our waste. We should consider recovering energy from wastes after having put in place our recycling initiatives, since technologies for energy recovery have to be diligently assessed and the costs thereof properly weighed. Only through full, informed discussions and proper assessment can we deliver energy from waste which this Bill is heading for.

I am sure that whilst compiling and analysing data on use and benefits of renewable energy, which forms part of its functions, the Agency will look at the waste energy options and come up with clear recommendations.

Madam Speaker, this Government has, in its Programme 2015-2019, proposed a host of measures to promote sustainable development. Furthermore, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, also stated in his Economic Statement that this Government remains committed to adopting a responsible and environmentally sustainable policy regarding energy production, waste management and physical infrastructural development. Rightly so, since 2015 will be a major turning point in the history of mankind and sustainable development with the forthcoming adoption of a New Development Framework, Post 2015.

On the national front, the Bill will create the enabling conditions for its promotion and use of renewable energy. The Bill will help address the energy environmental challenges lying ahead. The heart of this Bill rests on innovation and shows our commitment to energy security, diversity and efficiency. Diversification of energy supply towards alternate sources can greatly relieve dependence on conventional energy sources over time while helping to cope with growing environmental concerns.

This Bill will, no doubt, renew and extend our commitment to the environment, both resolving and supporting a future of cleaner energy. It is important to remember that there is no single solution to meeting energy demand and Mauritius will have to rely on an array of resources to meet the energy needs and this will, *inter alia*, include renewable sources and traditional fossil fuels linked with new technologies to reduce their environmental impact.

Madam Speaker, we are aware that the work lying ahead of us is of course, a tall order, a difficult and tedious process. But we are confident that once Renewable Energy Agency is fully operational, it will make provision for incentives and subsidies for the promotion of renewables such as wind and solar energy and also for the future development of economically competitive fuels and technologies. By so doing, we will be moving steadily towards implementing the new formulated Sustainable Development goal for Energy in the new global development framework. That would be the footprint of *l'Alliance Lepep*.

Once again, I would like to congratulate my colleague for a Bill that is well-balanced and with clear objectives, functions and other provisions that will allow such an Agency to play its role fully.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Baloomoody rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Ag. Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

(6.25 p.m.)

BEL OMBRE, CHAMOUNY & SURINAM - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, I have given notice to the Clerk that I intend to raise a matter at Adjournment Time today and the matter concerns the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management and it is entitled: “The plight of the flood victims of the regions of Bel Ombre, Chamouny and Surinam and the infrastructural works to be carried out thereat.”

Madam Speaker, *nous sommes à la fin du mois de septembre. Dans une semaine nous entamons de plein-pied, nous allons entrer dans le mois d’octobre*, and this means in about two months’ time rainy season will start from January onwards and these three villages, which I have mentioned in the subject matter I wish to raise today, are villages which have been, in the beginning of this year, subject to heavy rainfall. In fact, during the weekend of the 07 and 08 March of this year devastating rainfall have caused and have provoked so much havoc, distress and misery to the population of these areas.

In fact, the village of - in this very House there have been several PQs on this issue dating back since in the early year 2000 - Bel Ombre is in a peculiar situation, Madam Speaker. Flooding is a recurrent problem in this area. The village and the sea level is nearly the same. The village is at the foot of the mountain and the rainwater from the mountains flow directly into the village. Therefore, the geographical situation is a heavy drawback to the villagers. The village itself constitutes a bore and this prevents water to be evacuated from the village and the soil in this area contains underground water and cannot absorb excess of rain. Therefore, there is little amount of absorption, and this, of course, prevents accumulation of water during heavy season. On top of those natural drawbacks, in the recent past there have been a lot of property development in the area with the IRS and so on, and therefore this can explain why during the heavy rainfall the situation is as dramatic as it was during the beginning of this year and several houses were flooded. During the first weekend of the

month of March, the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management, hon. Dayal, visited the area during those days, and he witnessed this dreadful situation at Bel Ombre. Several houses were flooded as I just said, Madam Speaker and in the past, some relief measures were taken. There was the construction of a *mur de soutènement*, of a *nouveau barrage*, but, unfortunately, these were piecemeal measures which did not, in fact, offer any sustainable solution to the problem. So, this is why, today, I wish to appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it that infrastructural works start as soon as possible.

I am quite aware that the hon. Minister has informed the House in a recent PQ that tenders will be launched soon, but I am just appealing to him that the bids be launched as quickly as possible and the works start as soon as possible because, as I have said, there are only two months left before the rainy seasons. I wish to ask the hon. Minister also to use his good offices, Madam Speaker, to see to it that these several victims of the floods - of course, they did receive the allowance of Rs133 per day for three days as the regulations provide, but many of these families lost their furniture and many electrical appliances during the flood and I appeal to him to use his good offices also to see to it that these flood victims of Bel Ombre area are compensated.

Close to the village of Bel Ombre, Madam Speaker, as you know, there are the villages of Chamouny and Surinam also. Both of these villages were also subject to the same trauma. In Chamouny, the Rivière Rafia overflowed. About 50 houses were completely hit by these floods. In one case, there was a poultry where there were about 10,000 chickens which died and had to be buried and, as I said, about 50 families were subjected to these floods. Their furniture and food and all their stuffs were destroyed and they also, have been living the same trauma as the village of Bel Ombre. Such was the case also for the village of Surinam where the Rivière Moulin-Cassé was overflowed, Madam Speaker. The house, especially of the Gian family, was completely devastated by the flood at Rivière Moulin-Cassé at Veerasamy Lane in Surinam. Water overflowed into the houses and consequent damages were caused to all these families. The river overflowed so much that the water entered into their house, wrenched and destroyed the aluminium window panels and doors, swept the whole house completely, damaged the furniture and the appliances.

So, Madam Speaker, my humble appeal to the hon. Minister is to see to it that matters are expedited. In view of climate change, in view of the property development which has taken place in Bel Ombre, as I have just said, I wish to appeal to the hon. Minister today to

avoid the villagers living in these three villages, not to experience the same nightmares and trauma that they have experienced during the beginning of this year and I appeal to him to see to it that in the case of Bel Ombre especially, the infrastructural works start as quickly as possible. The river is desilted and drenched and in the cases of the two other rivers at Chamouny and Surinam also, that the infrastructural works start as soon as possible.

I would also like to table, for the hon. Minister, certain photos which were taken during the flood in the beginning of this year which show clearly, Madam Speaker, how bad the damages were and how traumatic were these experiences for the occupants of these different houses and I am sure, knowing the hon. Minister, that he will see to it that the proper works are effected as soon as possible.

Thank you.

(6.33 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr J. Dayal): Madam Speaker, since December 2014, I was given the portfolio for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. It has been an obvious success story throughout with a 100% success story and zero fatality. I must say it has been thanks to my colleagues in Government and outside Government and also the PPS, hon. Thierry Henry.

(Interruptions)

It could not be better for all intents and purposes for the Government of *l'Alliance Lepep*.

The flooding that occurred during the first week of March 2015 is the direct result of improper handling of infrastructural works thereat within the established framework of proper disaster management. Had the vulnerabilities of the local residents been addressed within sustainable goals for mitigating vulnerabilities projects, such flooding could have been avoided sparing the inhabitants the trauma and prejudice of which they were victims.

In flooding and disaster management, what is of vital importance are –

- (i) proactive responses in terms of hardening of targets to prevent loss of life and property;
- (ii) mitigation of risks while attending to physical vulnerability of certain regions in the coastal zones prior to flooding with adequate storm water evacuation

methods, to ensure security of inhabitants and to protect the eco-system thereat;

- (iii) investment in the upgrading of the infrastructure to face situation of flash floods in a systematic manner. This was not done over the years, and, as a result, such disasters occurred, which I had the opportunity to view from ground and air. It is mandatory for proper disaster management to have a bird's-eye view with aerial surveys by helicopter to assess the situation professionally and come up with adequate remedial measures. In order to take proactive actions, we are investigating on disaster management and infrastructural structures to ensure the safety and livelihood of the inhabitants, more particularly, accessibility to the region, and also to maintain the beauty of the landscape, and safeguard the rich mangrove plantation including its rich biodiversity.

In order to bring sustainable development and capacity building with reliable, adequate measures, the following decisions were taken by me, my Ministry and the Government in collaboration with all stakeholders concerned, including Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre, Les Villas de Bel Ombre Ltée and Heritage Golf Ltd., I carried out a site visit on 08 March 2015, following which the following short-term measures were taken –

- (i) immediate measures include –
 - (a) Pumping of stagnant water from residential area, namely Cité Longtil by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, with the support of the SMF.
 - (b) Clean-up of the affected area undertaken with the assistance of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate.
 - (c) Larviciding and fogging by Ministry of Health and Quality of Life with the assistance of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate.
 - (d) Distribution of free meals and other basic needs items such as mattresses and school materials by NDRRMC of my Ministry in collaboration with District Councils, Caritas and Villas Valriche.

- (ii) Rehabilitation of the whole area to prevent accumulation of water and flooding as well as the stabilisation of the river banks.

Consultations have been held with the various stakeholders of the region to find solutions to the problem of flooding in the medium term.

Proactive measures have been designed by my Ministry to desilt the river St. Martin to increase water flow and construction of a rock bund on the upper side of the river bank to ensure protection and stability of the river. The whole works are estimated at Rs10 m.

Bids will be launched shortly and works are expected to start within a month following the award of the contract. The contract will be of four months' duration.

Furthermore, I directed Mrs Ng Yun Wing, Director of Environment at the Ministry of Environment and Mr Bholah, Chief Project Manager, that Compagnie Sucrière de Bel Ombre Ltd, Les Villas De Bel Ombre Ltée and Hermitage Golf Ltd, through their consultancy firm Arup SIGMA Ltd., to submit a report on flood mitigation measures to minimise the risk of potential floods and also to advise the RDA for the upgrading of the bridge along the coastal road.

As directed by me, during a site visit effected, the consultants are contemplating a holistic approach of the whole catchment area in consultation with my Ministry. They will, according to their financial and other resources, implement remedial measures through CSR in a phased manner within their respective sites.

The report also covers the runabout which is subject to flooding, the St. Martin bridge and the restoration of the wetland and drain network from the incoming upstream watercourses.

As far as the villages of Chamouny and Surinam are concerned where there has been no severe flooding, we will work with competent authorities to ensure the safety of inhabitants. There has been no report of flooding so far.

Thank you.

At 6.39 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHELTER FOR CHILDREN IN DISTRESS - CARERS

(No. B/552) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the shelter for children in distress, she will state the number thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) number of children staying therein, and
- (b) ratio of carers to children.

Reply: The total number of shelters for children in distress is 21, out of which 5 are under the aegis of my Ministry. In fact, 4 of these 5 shelters are managed by NGOs and a remaining one by the National Children's Council.

Concerning part (a) of the question, the total number of children placed in shelters as at 17 September 2015 is 556 (268 boys and 288 girls).

As regards part (b), I am apprised that the ratio of carers to children varies according to the age and the number of children as well as their physical and mental abilities. The average is 1:5 during day time and 1:4 at night time.

**PLAINE VERTE - GYMNASIUM & MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX -
CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/553) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of infrastructures in Plaine Verte, Port Louis, he will -

- (a) state where matters stand in relation to the proposed construction of a new gymnasium on the premises of the Concorde Garden, Plaine Verte, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to where matters stand in relation to the construction of a new multipurpose complex at Renaissance, Plaine Verte, indicating -
 - (i) the amount of money earmarked therefor, and
 - (ii) if fresh tenders have been launched therefor and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

LA CAMBUSE - HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

(No. B/554) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed hotel development by Le

Chaland Resort Hotel, at La Cambuse, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port, information as to if it has granted a Building and Land Use Permit therefor and, if so, indicate -

- (a) when;
- (b) the number of organisations and individuals who had objected thereto;
- (c) the date on which the Ramsar Committee Clearance was granted therefor, indicating the names of the committee members thereof, and
- (d) if the subject site is located within environmentally sensitive areas.

Reply: I am informed that a Local Authority issues, according to established guidelines under relevant legislations, a Building and Land Use Permit after it has obtained all the necessary clearances and permits in respect of an application.

I am, in this context, informed by the District Council of Grand Port that following the obtention of the relevant clearances from the following Ministries and Departments, namely Wastewater Management Authority, Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Department of Civil Aviation, Road Development Authority, Ministry of Housing and Lands, National Heritage Fund, the Council on 09 September 2015 issued a Building and Land Use Permit to Currimjee Jeewanjee and Co. Ltd for the construction of Le Chaland Resort Hotel (Phase I) comprising of 164 rooms, and other related amenities.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that ten non-governmental organisations and 1370 individuals had objected to the project.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the clearance of the Ramsar Committee of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was obtained on 23 June 2014. As regards the names of the Committee Members, I am arranging for the information to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As far as the last part of the question is concerned, I am informed by the Chief Executive of the District Council that the site where the hotel will be constructed is not earmarked as an Environmentally Sensitive Area according to the Grand Port Savanne Outline Scheme. In fact, it is the Blue Bay Marine Park which is listed as an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

CEB - 'PAY AS YOU USE' PRE-PAID METERS

(No. B/555) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public whether, in regard to electricity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to -

- (a) the number of households in mainland Mauritius which have had their supply thereof disconnected since 01 January 2013 to date, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if the Board is still contemplating the introduction of 'Pay as You Use' pre-paid meters for certain categories of consumers.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that it has disconnected the electricity supply of 69,738 households in mainland Mauritius since 01 January 2013 to date for non-payment of electricity bills and at customer's requests.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that in September 2012, the CEB in collaboration with the Mauritius Telecom and the then Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment introduced a prepaid metering project targeting 400 vulnerable households. Only 24 households registered for the project.

I have been informed by the CEB that it is reviewing the project to address the numerous technical and administrative impediments and consider the implementation of a proven and tested prepaid solution.

PARASTATAL BODIES & STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE – FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(No. B/556) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the parastatal bodies and State-owned enterprise, he will give a list of the ones which have negative balance sheets, indicating in each case, the amount of debt as at to date.

Reply: I presume that by negative Balance Sheet, the hon. Member is referring to a situation where an entity has negative equity in the case of a company or a negative capital in the case of a statutory body.

An exercise on the Financial Statements of each of the 175 statutory bodies and State-owned companies is being carried out and the list requested will be tabled upon its completion.

COURTS LTD – WORKERS – LAID OFF

(No. B/557) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the recent laying off of the workers at Courts Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) if the ‘last in first out’ principle, as promised, has been fully adhered to, and
- (c) the compensation being paid thereto.

Reply: In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that in the wake of the taking over of Iframac Retail Ltd (also known as Courts) by Mamouth (Mauritius) Ltd, the Special Administrator appointed in BAI Co (Mtius) Ltd and Related Companies terminated the employment of 188 workers, out of a total workforce of 917 workers on 10 September 2015.

According to the enquiry carried out by officers of my Ministry, I am informed that the Special Administrator has applied the principle of ‘Last In First Out’ based on the respective specific occupations of the workers and the departments where they were posted whilst establishing the list of workers to be made redundant. He has taken into account the various outlets that are being kept in operation and the exigencies of the specific departments. However, I am informed that the principle of ‘Last In First Out’ was not adopted in the case of two drivers and two sales representatives.

My Ministry is pursuing discussions with the Special Administrator and Mamouth (Mtius) Ltd with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution in regard to the four workers concerned.

I wish to inform the House that 176 out of the 188 redundant workers have been admitted in the Workfare Programme. The remaining 12 workers have not yet made an application to join the Programme.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the Special Administrator has decided to pay to the 188 laid off workers as provided in the Employment Rights Act -

- (a) all outstanding wages up to 10 September 2015;
- (b) one month’s wages as indemnity in lieu of notice;
- (c) refund of outstanding annual leave, and
- (d) End of Year Gratuity on a pro-rata basis.

Additionally, Government has agreed to make an ex-gratia payment of 15 days for each completed year of service.

As at today, 42 out of the 188 redundant workers have accepted the offer made by the Special Administrator and have already been paid their dues.

PETIT-VERGER, SAINT PIERRE - RIVER WATER - INQUIRY

(No. B/558) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the recent “whitening” of the river water over a long distance at Petit Verger, Saint Pierre, he will state if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Reply: Following a complaint received on Sunday 13 September 2015 concerning “whitening” of river Moka at La Laura, an immediate site visit was effected on the same day by officers of *Police de L’Environnement*. I am informed that at the time of visit, the river water was found to be turbid and no dead fish were found. Samples of river water were collected for analysis.

As per information gathered from St Pierre Police Station, dredging works were being carried out at river Moka, opposite La Laura village hall. The District Council of Moka confirmed that these works were being undertaken in the context of the forthcoming religious festival, Ganesh Chaturthi.

It was confirmed that dredging works were being carried out with an excavator without mitigating measures. The excavated soil which contains clay materials resulted in the whitish-brown colour observed downstream. Water analysis carried out by the National Environmental Laboratory revealed that all parameters analyzed were within standards except for Total Suspended Solids which was due to the dredging works.

The contractor of the District Council of Moka was requested to immediately stop works and install geotextile membranes across the river to capture all existing loose soil particles, rocks and mud, to which he complied with. During a follow-up site visit effected the day after, it was observed that the dredging works had been completed and the river water was clear.

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN COASTAL PROTECTION AND
REHABILITATION IN MAURITIUS PROJECT**

(No. B/559) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the project on “Capacity Development in Coastal Protection and Rehabilitation in Mauritius” undertaken by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), he will state the outcome thereof.

Reply: With regard to the project, I am informed that the field activities have been completed and that the final report will be submitted by end of October 2015. The objective of the project is to mitigate the impacts of coastal erosion around Mauritius in a holistic manner using innovative and long-term resilient coastal protection and reef conservation measures.

During the project, the experts carried out a survey of the coastal zone around Mauritius and they reported that on the whole, 11 % of the coast has been eroded, 30 % of the coast has been accreting and 59 % is stable. Severe erosion has been noted at Albion, Mon Choisy and Bel Ombre. Percentage of living corals in the lagoon has been estimated to be 27 %. A decrease from 50 % in 2001 to 27 % in 2012 has been noted.

Coastal conservation plans for 14 sites have been prepared. The main recommendations are improvement of vertical structures, adherence to setback policy, beach nourishment, sand recycling, coral transplantation, seagrass and mangrove plantation. The 14 sites are; Pointe aux Cannoniers, Mon Choisy, Quatre Cocos/Trou d’Eau Douce, Ile aux Cerfs, Pointe d’Esny, Bel Ombre, Le Morne, Flic en Flac, Albion, Pointe-aux-Sables, Albion (Lighthouse), Grand Sable, Baie du Tombeau, and Bras d’Eau .

As part of the project, demonstration projects have been carried at two coastal stretches to ensure capacity building of the relevant stakeholders, namely -

- Grand Sable Village: Physical demonstration project in the form of gravel beach nourishment also referred to as flexible beach revetment, as an innovative technique, has been tested successfully against coastal erosion and wave overtopping. On the advice of the experts, My Ministry intends to replicate this technique on other similar sites.
- Pointe d’Esny: Non-physical demonstration project together with the community participation through adherence to land use regulation, setback policy, sand nourishment, sand bypassing, and monitoring, amongst others.

With regard to capacity building on coastal protection and rehabilitation, a number of seminars, workshops and technical exchange programmes has been organised for concerned stakeholders. Furthermore, officers of my Ministry and other organisations have also been provided training in Japan. Such capacity building programmes on coastal zone management include beach erosion control techniques and monitoring, coral reef ecology, wave measuring and analysis, water quality monitoring and beach reprofiling.

My Ministry has already approached the JICA for further assistance in the implementation of recommendations as a second phase to this project, taking on board Rodrigues and outer islands.

PUBLIC BEACH - REHABILITATION

(No. B/560) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the public beaches, he will state the measures, if any, which have been taken to -

- (a) prevent the erosion thereof, and
- (b) rehabilitate the public beach of Blue Bay/Pointe d'Esny.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to highlight that coastal erosion is a natural phenomenon, exacerbated by human interferences and climate change.

My Ministry has, so far, taken several measures to address coastal erosion. Some of the important measures are -

- (i) Application of a setback policy for construction of structures on the shoreline as per the Planning Policy Guidance and through the Environment Impact Assessment and Preliminary Environmental Report mechanisms;
- (ii) Implementation of the recommendations made in Baird's Report (2003) on "Coastal Erosion in Mauritius". Beach rehabilitation works have been accordingly carried out at a number of eroded sites around Mauritius. The works, based on site specificities and severity of erosion, consisting of both hard measures such as rock revetment, and soft measures such as beach replenishment with sand, have been completed.

The sites where major works have been carried out, include - Trou aux Biches, Grand Baie, Cap Malheureux, Poudre d'Or, Belle Mare, Trou d'Eau Douce, GRSE, Quatre Soeurs, Rivière des Galets, Le Morne, Flic en Flac and Pointes aux Sables. Works are currently ongoing at Baie Du Cap and Bain Boeuf public beach. Works will soon start at Le Morne village public beach, La Prairie public beach, and La Preneuse public beach;

- (iii) Completion of a 3-year integrated coastal erosion assessment project with the help of highly qualified international experts hired under the aegis of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The main objective of this project is to mitigate the impacts of coastal erosion using innovative and long term resilient coastal protection and reef conservation measures, as well as build capacity of relevant authorities to address this issue. Under the project, an innovative technique, namely, gravel beach nourishment, also referred to as flexible beach revetment has been tested successfully at Grand Sables against coastal erosion and wave overtopping. On the advice of the experts, My Ministry intends to replicate this technique on other similar sites. I am informed that the final report of the project is expected to be submitted by October 2015. My Ministry has already approached the JICA for further assistance in the implementation of recommendations as a second phase to this project taking on board Rodrigues and outer islands;
- (iv) Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the coastal zone of Mauritius funded by the Adaptation Fund set up under the United Nations. This is a 5-year programme which is fully funded through a grant to the tune of Rs270 m. and which started in July 2012. The programme is addressing current climate change risks at three vulnerable coastal sites, namely Mon Choisy, Rivière des Galets and Quatre Soeurs and will involve the application of specific adaptation measures for coastal protection. Activities are still on-going; and
- (v) Rehabilitation works for the period 2015-2017. Seven priority sites for coastal protection works and seven sites for beach rehabilitation works have been identified. In this endeavour, provisions to the tune of

Rs116 m., have been made in my Ministry's budget for 2015-2016. My Ministry is presently in the process of recruiting a consultancy firm for the design and supervision of proposed works.

Furthermore, there is an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Committee comprising relevant stakeholder set up under the Chair of the Director of Environment of my Ministry which, inter alia, follows up and makes recommendations on approaches to address coastal erosion around Mauritius.

With regard to part (b), my Ministry carried out beach nourishment works with sand and removal of an existing retaining wall in November 2012 at Blue Bay public beach. However, following the passage of a cyclone, loss of sand from the beach was observed. Following continuous beach profile monitoring carried out at this site, I am informed that the beach has already stabilised. Should there be any significant erosion occurring at this site, appropriate actions will be taken.

I wish to inform the House that at this point in time, there is no declared public beach at Pointe d'Esny.

However, a coastal conservation plan for this *campement* site area has been prepared under the JICA project. The main objective is to involve and raise awareness among stakeholder on beach conservation, setback policy, groin removal, and beach nourishment, amongst others, to ensure that the measures are implemented in a holistic and sustainable manner.

HAJJ 2015 – MAURITIAN PILGRIMS – SCREEN & FOLLOW-UP

(No. B/561) Dr Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the emergence of the virus causing MERS in Saudi Arabia which has recently caused several deaths, he will state –

- (a) if adequate information have been given to the Mauritian pilgrims accomplishing the Hajj 2015 in relation thereto, and
- (b) the measures that have been taken to screen and follow-up the pilgrims on their arrival.

(Withdrawn)

**SPECIAL OLYMPIC WORLD SUMMER GAMES –
ATHLETES - PERFORMANCE**

(No. B/562) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Special Olympic World Summer Games which was held from 25 July to 02 August 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of athletes who represented Mauritius thereto, indicating their respective performances, and
- (b) if any provision has been made for a cash prize for our Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals Athletes.

Reply: I am informed by the Mentally Handicapped Persons Sports Federations that, a delegation of 18 persons comprising 10 athletes (5 boys and 5 girls) and 8 cadres participated in the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Los Angeles, USA from the 25 July to 02 August 2015.

The athletes won 16 medals: 5 gold, 3 silver and 8 bronze medals in Athletics and Bocce

As regards part (b) of the question, the High Level Sports Unit of the Ministry of Youth and Sports has not yet received the official results from the concerned federation. Once the official results are obtained, High Level Sports Unit of the Ministry will meet to make appropriate recommendations to the Ministry for the payment of cash prizes.

**PAILLES - WASTEWATER SEWERAGE NETWORK PROJECT -
IMPLEMENTATION**

(No. B/563) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wastewater Sewerage Network Project in the region of Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation of Phases 1 and 2 thereof respectively, indicating if there has been any delay in the carrying out of the tender procedures in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, indicate the timeframe set for the implementation thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that with regard to Phase 1 of the project, it invited bids for construction of 40 Km of trunk sewer and a pumping

station on 28 November 2014. The closing date was 25 February 2015. The Central Procurement Board submitted its recommendation to the WMA on 29 May 2015.

The WMA issued the notification of award on 09 September 2015. This delay is due to communication problems in obtaining the no objection from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the OPEC Fund for International Development. Works are expected to start early next year.

Regarding Phase 2, according to information from the WMA, the design and preparation of the Bidding documents are under preparation. The works contract is expected to be awarded by end of 2016.

MINISTRIES, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS & PARASTATAL BODIES - TELEPHONE COSTS

(No. B/564) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Ministries, Government Departments and parastatal bodies, he will state the measures that have been initiated or will be taken to reduce the monthly telephone costs, indicating if –

- (a) dormant telephone lines and telephone lines with rentals only will be cancelled to avoid the payment of monthly rental fees and surcharges, and
- (b) directives will be given thereto for the installation of GSM gateways for mobile phones to their existing PABX telephone systems with a view to reducing the monthly telephone costs when calling to a mobile service provider.

(Withdrawn)

CAMP CAROL, KENYA - STATE LAND - SALE

(No. B/565) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the sale of State land to lease holders at Camp Carol, Kenya, in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state where matters stand, indicating if the survey carried out in relation thereto has been completed and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)