



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2016

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

ANNOUNCEMENT

MOTION

BILLS (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

Members

Members

THE CABINET**(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)**

Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Santaram Baboo	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain, GCSK	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and

Institutional Reforms

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah

Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives

Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo

Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform
Institutions

Hon. Premdut Koonjoo

Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries,
Shipping and Outer Islands

Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen
Cheong, MSK

Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms,
Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and
Disaster and Beach Management

Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn

Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and
Training

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin (Temporary Transfer to RRA)
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Pannoo, Mr Vinod

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 03 of 2016

Sitting of 12 April 2016

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. **Prime Minister's Office** –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (No. IV of 2016).

(In Original)

B. **Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport** –

(a) The Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 43 of 2016)

(b) The Road Traffic (Control of Contract Car and Contract Bus Operations) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 44 of 2016)

C. **Ministry of Health and Quality of Life** –

(a) The Pharmaceutical Product (Fees) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 47 of 2016)

(b) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 48 of 2016)

(c) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 49 of 2016)

D. **Ministry of Local Government** –

(a) The City Council of Port Louis (Fees for Classified Trades) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No.78 of 2016)

(b) The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill (Council Yard) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 79 of 2016)

E. **Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation** –

The National Identity Card (Extension of Validity Period) (Amendment No. 2)

Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 46 of 2016)

F. **Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection** –

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No.45 of 2016)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 80 of 2016)
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 81 of 2016)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 82 of 2016)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 83 of 2016)
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 84 of 2016)
- (g) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No.85 of 2016)

G. **Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training** –

- (a) The Attorneys' and Notaries' Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 50 of 2016)
- (b) The Baking Industry (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 51 of 2016)

- (c) The Blockmaking, Construction, Stone Crushing and Related Industries (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 52 of 2016)
- (d) The Catering and Tourism Industries (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 53 of 2016)
- (e) The Cinema Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 54 of 2016)
- (f) The Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 55 of 2016)
- (g) The Distributive Trades (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 56 of 2016)
- (h) The Domestic Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 57 of 2016)
- (i) The Electrical, Engineering and Mechanical Workshops (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 58 of 2016)
- (j) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 59 of 2016)
- (k) The Factory Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 60 of 2016)
- (l) The Field-crop and Orchard Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 61 of 2016)
- (m) The Light Metal and Wooden Furniture Workshops (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 62 of 2016)
- (n) The Livestock Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 63 of 2016)
- (o) The Newspapers and Periodicals Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 64 of 2016)
- (p) The Nursing Homes (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 65 of 2016)

- (q) The Office Attendants (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 66 of 2016)
- (r) The Pre-Primary School Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 67 of 2016)
- (s) The Printing Industry (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 68 of 2016)
- (t) The Private Secondary School Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 69 of 2016)
- (u) The Public Transport (Buses) Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 70 of 2016)
- (v) The Road Haulage Industry (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 71 of 2016)
- (w) The Salt-Manufacturing Industry (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 (Government Notice No. 72 of 2016)
- (x) The Sugar Industry (Agricultural Workers) (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 73 of 2016).
- (y) The Sugar Industry (Non-Agricultural Workers) (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 74 of 2016)
- (z) The Tailoring Trade (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 75 of 2016)
- (aa) The Tea Industry Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 76 of 2016)
- (ab) The Travel Agents and Tour Operators Workers Remuneration (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 77 of 2016)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

YIHAI PAILLES GARDEN SMART CITY PROJECT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Yihai Pailles Garden Smart City Project, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation (SIC), information as to –
 - (i) the changes that have occurred in the composition of the Board and in the top management of the SIC since December 2014 and who represented the Board thereof during the discussions held with the Yihai International Investment Management Ltd.;
 - (ii) the value of the 97 acres and property involved therein;
 - (iii) who took the decision for the SIC to be a minority shareholder therein, and
 - (iv) if copies of the Letter of Comfort issued by the Board of Investment, the Memorandum of Understanding and the Shareholders Agreement will be made public, and
- (b) state if Cabinet has referred same to the Independent Commission against Corruption.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the process of selling the Domaine Les Pailles (DLP) properties dates as far back as 2012. In fact, in that context, State Investment Corporation (SIC) appointed KPMG as Transaction Adviser.

KPMG launched an Expression of Interest on 11 April 2012 to dispose of 78 *Arpents* of land including the five restaurants in an extent of 9 *Arpents* owned by Domaine Les Pailles and 69 *Arpents* Guibies Properties Ltd., both subsidiaries of the SIC. Consequently, Yihai International Investment Management Ltd (Yihai), represented by Mr Li Hai from China was selected as the preferred bidder. The offered price was Rs486 m. for acquisition of the 78 *Arpents*.

I am informed that the sale transaction did not materialise as Yihai refused to employ the existing 160 staff of Domaine Les Pailles.

In June 2013, SIC launched a Request for Proposals for rental of the restaurants at Domaine Les Pailles. Given that the offers received were not commercially attractive, this also did not materialise.

In October 2013, SIC management restarted negotiations with Yihai on its offer made in 2012. Yihai then accepted to maintain the employment of the 160 staff for a minimum period of two years against a reduction of Rs45 m. in the sale price bringing the net offer to Rs441 m.

In March 2014, a MoU between SIC and Yihai was signed and a 5% deposit amounting to Rs22 m. was paid by Yihai to SIC.

With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, the Board of SIC was reconstituted in February 2015, as follows -

- Mr Ayub Nakhuda, Chairperson;
- Miss How Cheey Lan How Fok Cheung, the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;
- Mr Visvanaden Soondram, Lead Analyst, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;
- Mr Premode Neerunjun, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and
- Mrs Banoomatee Veerasamy, Acting Managing Director
- In April 2015, two new Directors were appointed on the Board, namely –
- Mr Vidianand Lutchmeeparsad, Permanent Secretary, in replacement of Miss How Cheey Lan How Fok Cheung who has been posted to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.
- Mr Kritananda Naghee Reddy, Acting Principal State Counsel, Attorney General's Office.

Following the resignation of Mr Iqbal Mallam Hassam on 18 December 2014, Mrs Banoomatee Veerasamy was assigned duties as Acting Managing Director as from 26 December 2014.

The current Chairperson and the Acting Managing Director represented the Board during the discussions with Yihai International Group as from March 2015.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the value of 78 *Arpents* was Rs486 m. I must add that after the survey exercise carried out by a Land Surveyor in May 2014, it was found that the actual land area to be disposed was, in fact, 96 *Arpents* instead of 78 *Arpents*, that is, larger by 18 *Arpents*.

In October 2014, the additional land was valued by a Chartered Valuation Surveyor at Rs55.74 m. An offer was made in November 2014 to Yihai to acquire the surplus of 18 *Arpents* for an additional sum of Rs55.74 m. However, Yihai considered the additional plot of land to be marginal and made a counter offer of Rs1.86 m., that is, Rs100,000 per *Arpent*. The sale did not materialise.

Regarding part (a) (iii) of the question, it must be pointed out that at the beginning, the decision was for an outright sale. Subsequently, in January 2015, the new Board decided not to proceed with the sale and the signature of the deed of sale.

Yihai Investment Group, subsequently made representations and in March 2015, following consultations with Yihai, the Board took the decision to enter into a Joint Venture whereby SIC will bring the total land area as equity contribution with Yihai contributing in form of cash and building materials.

There was no issue of majority or minority shareholding. The whole matter is presently being investigated by ICAC.

From the outset, the shareholding was fixed at 30% for the SIC and 70% for Yihai. This shareholding percentage has been included in the Shareholders Agreement signed between SIC and Yihai.

The company has been incorporated on 15 September 2015 with a notional capital of Rs100,000 with a proposed contribution of Rs70,000 from Yihai and Rs30,000 from SIC. The SIC land has not yet been transferred nor the cash from Yihai.

In the course of the implementation of the project, Yihai will bring an additional equity in the form of cash, equipment and building materials. This will result in Yihai shareholding reaching 70% as per the Shareholders Agreement.

As regards part (a) (iv) of the question, I understand that ICAC has already taken possession of these documents and when ICAC completes its investigation, I personally do not have any issue in making the documents public.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, the reply is in the affirmative. The case was referred to ICAC on 02 March 2016.

Mr Bérenger: On the first part of the question, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has confirmed that Mrs Veerasamy, that is, the former Minister of Finance's sister, was appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer and member of the Board only a few days after the last general elections. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm whether I am right when I say that, although advertisement for that post of Chief Executive was called for in December 2014, interviews were carried out, but to this date, that lady, the former Minister's sister, is still Acting Chief Executive and no Chief Executive has been recruited?

The Prime Minister: Yes, she is still acting.

Mr Bérenger: Can I take it that ICAC will be looking into that also?

The Prime Minister: Well, I hope so!

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that the Acting Chief Executive and somebody else I missed, took part in the discussions with Yihai. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he would be agreeable to place in the Library copies of the Minutes of discussions when the issue was discussed between Yihai and SIC?

The Prime Minister: Well, I hope there are Minutes of Proceedings. If somebody is there, he can tell me. Normally, there should be, but whether I should produce that, because there is an inquiry going on by ICAC, I think there are certain information, according to law, I am not allowed to disclose at this juncture. Well, a note says after inquiry of ICAC, yes, it will be done.

Mr Bérenger: Good, thank you! I don't know how long the inquiry will take, but we will be waiting for a copy of those Minutes of Proceedings. Madam Speaker, if I can move to the next question. Is it 98 or 97 acres exactly?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Well, *arpents*, acres...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Well, anyway, can I know whether the *Centre de Conférence* and the Casino buildings are included in the property?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Whether the buildings, the *Centre de Conférence* and the Casino of Pailles are involved in the project.

The Prime Minister: Well, the answer is no.

Mr Bérenger: Good! Can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he has put himself the question and asked why since general elections, no re-evaluation of those assets, surely that land, has been carried out by the new Government?

The Prime Minister: Well, it has not been done. I don't know why. But, if need be, I can have it done.

Mr Bérenger: Very Good! Will you agree with me that, in fact, there has been gross under valuation? I hope ICAC is looking into that carefully. There has been gross under valuation of the value of that property being acquired and, therefore, there is an urgent need to review the whole thing. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me that this is where the problem starts? On the one hand, there is under evaluation of the assets, of the property concerned which belongs to SIC and, probably, there will be massive over valuation of the building material and so on that the Chinese partner is supposed to bring in and the design is for, therefore, SIC. And the Rt. hon. Prime Minister told us it's in the Shareholders Agreement that SIC, as a result, would be a minority shareholder with only 30%.

The Prime Minister: Well, I, myself - we were discussing to get the answers through the PNQ - expressed doubts whether the value that will be put in the future on building, etc., that is going to be brought in by Yihai, whether we can have proper supervision and we can evaluate these things to make sure that there is no over valuation by the other party. In fact, they may bring in much less than 70% and still be the majority shareholder. My attention is being drawn to the fact that the valuation was done under the previous Government.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but the valuation was done on behalf of SIC by Government and they have been acting on that. Well, as I said, I feel it is needed that we should have another valuation. I am ready and willing to do it.

Mr Bérenger: But, in the meantime, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he will agree to give the guarantee to the country - because we are talking about *patrimoine national*, property of the people of the country - that, whatever happens, whether SIC re-

evaluates the property that they bring in and so on or bring in cash also, in no circumstances, will the SIC has less than 51% of the shareholding?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can't give any guarantee as to that because they have already signed an agreement which may be binding between the parties. So, it is difficult for me to pronounce on that.

Mr Bérenger: Betamax and so on, we had plenty of agreements which have been reviewed. So, is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister telling me that this agreement between SIC and Yihai is even more solid than the Betamax or whatever other agreement that cannot be reviewed?

The Prime Minister: We will look into the matter after inquiry.

Mr Bérenger: On the issue of who decided exactly, whether it is through the Shareholders Agreement, whether it is through over evaluation on one side, under evaluation and so on, but, finally, the decision was taken that the SIC would be a minority shareholder that has been included in the shareholding agreement, as we have just heard. Finally, who decided? Was it the Board or was it the then Minister of Finance and Economic Development who decided on that specific point?

The Prime Minister: From the information that I have been given, it's the Board that decided.

Mr Bérenger: Well, if it's the Board, what were the directives, if any, from the then Minister of Finance and Economic Development to his representatives on that Board.

The Prime Minister: We should ask the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development. He may be knowing. I am not aware.

Mr Bérenger: Well, you are the Prime Minister and now Minister of Finance and Economic Development. You have to reply to the questions. I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say: yes, there is an inquiry by ICAC ongoing. Just to clarify things, is the inquiry by ICAC on both legs, that is, the famous Rs44 m. euro loan and this Domaine Les Pailles-Yihai Project?

The Prime Minister: Well, the matter has been referred to ICAC to have a general inquiry. That is all I can say for the time being.

Mr Bérenger: Good! Can I know whether - as things stand with the inquiry going on by ICAC - this project stands frozen or has it been abandoned as it stands now?

The Prime Minister: Well, I suppose for the time being it is frozen.

Mr Bérenger: For the time being it is frozen?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: I hope it is a long time! Can I know whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has communicated to ICAC or whether anybody has communicated to ICAC, including any of his Ministers, information to the effect that there has been transfer of money in that case? Two sums are mentioned, supposedly 3 million US dollars and another one, 1 million US dollars. In the case of the 3 million US dollars, it is supposed to have been transferred to a bank in Hong Kong and, as the Rt. hon. Prime Minister knows, the accusation from his former Minister of Finance against the present Minister for Financial Affairs is that he has been spreading that information around. Therefore, has the Minister for Financial Services been questioned or is going to be questioned by ICAC on that score?

The Prime Minister: Well, I must say that there were rumours around and that is why I insisted that the matter should be referred for inquiry by ICAC.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether when the negotiations started, at one time it was agreed between both parties that the Shareholders Agreement would be 55 per cent in favour of State Investment Corporation and 45 per cent in favour of the other partner, the Yihai Company?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware of this. I can only say what information has been passed on to me and I have just said it is 30:70 per cent.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister just informed the House that the shareholding structure would be 30:70 per cent and that the 70 per cent of Yihai would represent cash, building materials and equipment. But has there been a value, a sum representing this 70 per cent that has been agreed in the Shareholders Agreement?

The Prime Minister: Well, since they signed the agreement, I suppose they must have had some materials to justify what they have been doing. Apparently, the other side is to bring in Rs1.2 billion. Well, this is on paper. I don't know whether, as a matter of fact, this is going to materialise.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister mentioned that a deposit of Rs22 m. was made in this transaction. May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who was the public notary involved and what happened to that Rs22 m.?

The Prime Minister: It is notary Maigrot.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Famous!

Mr Uteem: What happened to the money?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The money is in the bank.

Madam Speaker: Your question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, Madam Speaker. Can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he has inquired, since he has taken over the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, firstly, to have this lady replaced at the State Investment Corporation as acting Director, and also inquired whether there have been meetings in Singapore or elsewhere between officers of the State Investment Corporation, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the local representatives of Yihai to that effect, where everything was concocted?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am waiting for the result of the inquiry before I take action.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I note with pleasure that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has been very transparent, and I thank him for that. Would he consider the possibility, after having referred the matter to ICAC, of referring the matter also to the Financial Intelligence Unit in light of what information the hon. Leader of the Opposition has given concerning the alleged transfer of funds to an account in Hong Kong and also referring the matter to the Central CID - since clearly it is a matter of truth and lies, we have to know

which is which - following the very serious averments in an affidavit made by the former hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development against the sitting Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, somewhere, some place? Maybe the Rt. hon. Prime Minister could consider the Financial Intelligence Unit as well as the CID to complete the investigation.

The Prime Minister: We have already referred it to the FIU. The FIU is inquiring. But I don't see the necessity, when ICAC is inquiring, at the same time for the CID to inquire.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: I have a last question. We have heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that ICAC, at the request of Cabinet, is carrying out a double-barrelled inquiry into both issues, the so-called euro loan of Rs44 m. taken by the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development with the State Bank of Mauritius and this Yihai. Therefore, it is confirmed that ICAC is inquiring, at the request of Cabinet, on both issues. Being given that situation, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has always taken the stand that once ICAC comes in, the Minister concerned should step down, and if he is cleared, he resumes his place in Government, as has taken place in the past. Am I right in saying that with this as background and with the fact that ICAC is carrying out this double-barrelled inquiry - very serious inquiry - that last week, he had decided to ask the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development to step down, but was prevented from doing that?

The Prime Minister: I neither asked nor did prevent. Madam Speaker, I want to make one thing very clear. The Members of the Opposition have been campaigning outside that the Police is doing injustice by simply on an accusation, on allegation, arresting people, bringing provisional and bailout. They consider it most improper and unjust. Because of that, in the two cases of hon. Dayal and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, I asked the Commissioner of Police not to take upon himself a decision to bring anyone of them before the Court of law and have a provisional. I asked him to have the inquiry completed, not to take decision by him, but refer it to the DPP. Let the DPP decide whether there is a case and, if there is a case, under what section of the law and what offence. This is exactly what has been done in the case of hon. Dayal. But why did I ask hon. Dayal to step down? I am sorry, I am not trying to cause any prejudice, but insofar as I am concerned, as a Barrister, having read the transcript of the registration, I have come to the conclusion that if this is admissible in Court, then there

is strong evidence against the suspect. That is why, in his case, I asked him to step down. But, in the case of hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, there are legal implications. I did not want, at this stage, to ask him to step down. I am waiting for the inquiry. Let the matter be sent to the DPP. Let the DPP decide, if there is a case. In that case, I will certainly ask the Minister to step down. So, this is my stand. This is how I look at things.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/144 regarding the SIC has been withdrawn. The Table has also been advised that PQ B/184 in regard to the Heritage City Project will now be replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

SBM HOLDINGS - MR J. K. - DIRECTOR

(No. B/137) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Mr J. K., member of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if it is aware that the latter is also a Director and Consultant of the State Bank of Mauritius and, if so, indicate if this amounts to a conflict of interest and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, that will be taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that Mr J. K. is not a member of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Mauritius. The issue of conflict of interest therefore does not arise.

Dr. Sorefan: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that Mr J. K., is a consultant to the BoM without any tendering process as a Private Bank Stress Testing Officer there, paid to the tune of about Rs110,000 monthly and as Director of SBM and also Consultant contract to the tune of Rs80,000 monthly ...

Madam Speaker: Excuse me, Hon. Dr. Sorefan, are you asking a question or are you providing information?

Dr. Sorefan: I am asking whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - I said in the beginning - is aware!

The Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware whether there is a Consultant. I do not have anything in my file.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister correctly, Mr J. K., who was, I understand, number two at the Bank of Mauritius for a number of years - I am not commenting negatively on his performance; the past is the past - is now both a Director and Consultant of the State Bank of Mauritius. Did I hear that correctly? If that is true, I mean, as number two ...

(Interruptions)

State Bank, I am asking! I believe that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that people who have been at the head of the Bank of Mauritius *ont un devoir de reserve*, as they have been in presence of privileged information and so on. I do not think it is in order for them to take any job with any private bank. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have just answered. In my answer, I said that Mr J. K. is not a member of the Board of Directors. So, he cannot be a Director.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Khadaroo is not a Director of SBM Bank Mauritius Ltd. He is instead a Director of SBM Holdings Ltd and SBM Bank Holdings Ltd. He is also not a Consultant of the Bank of SBM Holdings. However, the State Bank has leased an exchange rate forecasting software developed by Dr. Khadaroo for exclusive use by the bank for a period of three years after a successful trial period of three months. A monthly fee of Rs80,000 is paid to him.

Dr. Sorefan: As he is a Consultant in the BoM as a Stress Test Officer, he is getting all data from private banks. Is that not a conflict of interest? Because he is getting all data from private banks, stress test and, at the same time, he is involved with the SBM. Is that not a pure conflict of interest?

The Prime Minister: Well, I do not know whether he is getting all data. From what I have been told, there is no conflict of interest. I understand Dr. Khadaroo provides training courses on econometric modelling to staff of BoM on part-time and contractual basis for a period of two years against a fee of Rs50,000 monthly. He started delivering the courses in January 2016.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister ...

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Dr. Sorefan: I got another question.

Madam Speaker: Next question, I said.

Dr. Sorefan: It is very important, please.

Madam Speaker: I have already said next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

STANDARD FOR AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION – MAURITIUS SIGNATORY

(No. B/138) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Common Reporting Standard, commonly referred to as the Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information, he will state if Mauritius is a signatory thereof and, if so, indicate where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Mauritius has committed to implement the standard for automatic exchange of information embedded in the Common Reporting Standards (CRS) developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This forms part of our continuous collaboration to fight international tax evasion.

In that connection, Mauritius has signed a Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on 29 October 2014, to implement the CRS.

Initially, Mauritius had undertaken to effect the first exchange of information on automatic basis in accordance with the CRS as from 30 September 2017. However, following strong representations made by stakeholders of the financial services sector, the first exchange has been postponed to 30 September 2018.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority is currently developing guidance notes to assist financial operators in the implementation of the CRS.

Dr. Sorefan: We heard from the Leader of the Opposition that there may be transfer of money to Hong Kong. May I know whether this should not be implemented straightaway

so that we can get information from banks abroad to inform the MRA what sum has been credited in the account, to know about people who are evading tax in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Well, there have been representations from the stakeholders. Sometimes when we do not listen to stakeholders, then we are blamed that we have been doing things too hurriedly without consultations. In this case, we have listened – I do not, but people who are responsible – to the representations of stakeholders and they found it justified to postpone it. Well, maybe what is being suggested can be done on a case to case basis.

Dr. Sorefan: I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say on a case to case basis. But if we are for transparency and good governance, does not the Rt. hon. Prime Minister think that it should be done, because of Panama Papers and a lot of other things that are coming, for the good name of Mauritius, that we do implement this as quickly as possible?

The Prime Minister: I have already answered that.

MBC - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/139) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of employees –

- (a) presently in post thereat, indicating the number thereof who are employed;
 - (i) on freelance basis;
 - (ii) on contract basis and;
 - (iii) on the permanent establishment thereof, and
- (b) recruited since July 2005 to December 2014, indicating in each case the mode of recruitment.

The Prime Minister: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Officer in Charge of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that a total of 709 employees are currently serving at the Corporation of whom -

- 131 are employed on a freelance basis;
- 22 are employed on a contract basis, and

- 556 are on the permanent and pensionable establishment.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library. However, I have to inform the House that the Report of the Public Sector Efficiency Bureau on Human Resource Management at the MBC has highlighted the following findings, among others -

- (i) there was no clear and defined recruitment and promotion procedures at the MBC. These were undertaken at the whims and caprices of the executive management team;
- (ii) some 134 employees had been granted salary increments more than that prescribed by the Pay Research Bureau;
- (iii) contract officers had been paid cash in lieu of annual leave though there was no record of attendance;
- (iv) the personal files of employees were not complete;
- (v) some 300 persons had been recruited under both freelance and contractual basis and there was no evidence that there had been a proper advertisement;
- (vi) there was no indication of the number of approved position for each grade at the MBC;
- (vii) Security Officers had been recruited though such posts did not exist;
- (viii) schemes of service had been tailored to accommodate employees who did not possess the required qualifications;
- (ix) a substantial number of contractual employees and those serving as freelance had been offered permanent employment over a very short lapse of time;
- (x) employees who had been previously dismissed were re-employed and subsequently offered employment on permanent and pensionable basis;
- (xi) there are instances where employees who joined as Helper had been promoted to the grade of Producer/Senior Producer;
- (xii) some 253 employees out of 412 (i.e. around 60%) on the permanent and pensionable establishment had been promoted over the period March 2013 to April 2014. Promotions had been granted without proper assessment, and

(xiii) the MBC could be the only organisation in the Public Sector which employs Office Attendants whose duties do not include cleaning of offices.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, after having listened to the 13 shortcomings, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister ask the MBC management to refer this case to the ICAC for further inquiries?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will look into this.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister once again for his straightforward answers. Since it is very clear from the report that he has referred to - the Public Sector Efficiency Bureau on Human Resource Management - that there were certain issues that are clearly problematic, what has been done ever since December 2014 to date, in order to redress issues? Could he table, may be, any document that might exist to show that there has been restructuring going in line with his policies?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have already given instructions that we should look into the matter and restructure the whole thing, and it will be done shortly.

Mr Mohamed: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister telling us - and we thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister firstly for having given those instructions. That's very important - that the same instructions were never given when hon. Bhadain was in charge of the MBC for one and a half years almost?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Rt. hon. Prime Minister consider asking the MBC to have a forensic auditing to see if the MBC needs so many staff, as mentioned by him?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will consider that.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

**TROU-AUX-CERFS - METEOROLOGICAL RADAR SYSTEM (NEW) -
INSTALLATION**

(No. B/140) **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 of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National

Development Unit whether, in regard to the project for the installation of the new Meteorological Radar System at Trou-aux-Cerfs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Meteorological Services, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, and
- (b) if the advice of the United Nations and/or any other organization has been sought as to the appropriateness thereof for Mauritius and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, the House will recall that, in reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/881 on 17 November 2015, I informed the House that the Agreement signed between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius in July 2015 provided for a Non-refundable Grant of one billion three hundred and forty million Japanese Yen (around Rs387 m.) for the acquisition of a new Radar System.

I am informed by the Director, Mauritius Meteorological Services, that the Consortium of Japan Weather Association and International Meteorological Consultant Inc has been selected by the JICA as Consultant for the project.

The civil works are due to start by August this year, and the project is expected to be completed by March 2018.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director, Mauritius Meteorological Services, that following the flash flood of 26 March 2008, the then Government sought the expertise of the World Meteorological Organization, an entity under the umbrella of the United Nations, to assess the capacity of the Mauritius Meteorological Services in regard to flash flood forecasting and to make recommendations, as appropriate.

One of the main recommendations contained in the Report of the Experts of the World Meteorological Organization submitted in November 2008 was the installation of a new weather radar system in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, in February 2009, the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme was sought to carry out a feasibility study for the provision of a new radar system. This request for assistance did not materialize.

Subsequently, a request was made to the JICA for the financing both the feasibility study and the procurement of a new radar system. This request was positively considered by the Japanese authorities.

In parallel, the French authorities were approached in January 2011 to advise on the specifications for the procurement of a new radar system, as well as on the suitability of the present location of the Trou-aux-Cerfs site to accommodate the new system. The recommendations of the French expert formed the basis of discussions with the JICA to finalise the project for the provision of a new radar system.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the facts I have just highlighted, the issue raised by the hon. Member in part (b) of the Parliamentary Question does not arise.

I also wish to point out that the JICA is committed to expediting the implementation of the project targeting the installation of the new radar system at Trou-aux-Cerfs by March 2018, as indicated earlier.

Mr Ameer Meea: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister just informed the House that, in fact, there is a grant from Japan to the tune of Rs387 m. May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what would be the total cost of this radar system? Because in the 2015-2016 Budget and 2016-2017 Budget, a sum of Rs270 m. has been budgeted for the same issue.

The Prime Minister: Budgetary provision for Radar project -

- (i) the project value for the implementation for the new radar system is Rs532,570,000 comprising grant element from Japan Rs387 m.;
- (ii) expenditure to be incurred by Government of Mauritius Rs145,570,000, total Rs532,570,000.

Provision has been made as follows in the budget -

2015/2016 Budget - Rs270 m.

2016/2017 Budget - Rs250 m.

Total - Rs520 m.

So far, an amount of Rs12,552,539 has been spent on this project.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

POLICE - PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. B/141) **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 of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the competitive examinations for the promotion exercises for the grade of Police Sergeants and Inspectors of Police, respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for a review of the mode thereof for enhanced transparency in the promotion exercises, including if consideration will be given for the -

- (a) publication of the results thereof, and
- (b) conduct thereof by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Section 91 of the Constitution empowers the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to make appointments and promotions in the Mauritius Police Force. Competitive examinations for promotion to the ranks of Police Sergeants and Inspectors are conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission in accordance with the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations 1997 and Standing Order 16 of the Mauritius Police Force.

The competitive examinations comprise written tests on the following subjects -

- (a) Laws, Court Procedure and Evidence;
- (b) Police Administration and Orders, and
- (c) Police Duties and Procedures.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that results of competitive examinations conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission are normally forwarded by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to the Commissioner of Police for publication in the Police Routine Orders.

The hon. Member will appreciate that neither the Commissioner of Police nor myself, can intervene with the Disciplined Forces Service Commission in this matter.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply to Parliamentary Question B/804 on 08 November 2011 wherein the then Prime Minister had informed that in 1996, the then Police Service Commission had approached the Mauritius

Examinations Syndicate for the latter to carry out promotional examinations on behalf of the Commission. However, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate had declined the proposal in view of the complexity and technicalities of the subjects on which the Police Officers have to be tested. The then Prime Minister further mentioned in his reply that the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate had thereafter expressed its preparedness to discuss anew the possibility of conducting examinations for promotion in the Mauritius Police Force. However, it would appear that there has been no follow up on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that in the Government Programme 2015-2019, it has been announced that an independent body would be set up to conduct examinations within the Police with a view to promoting transparency and meritocracy. This proposal is currently under consideration.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There have been enormous frustration and grievances since the result has been published, and I must say that this has always been the case whatever Government was in place; it is not just the case presently. So, in view that this Government is promoting good governance and transparency, may I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether this present exercise, where there have been *des cas flagrants* of injustice, be frozen until there has been the set-up of this new body, so that justice can prevail to everyone?

The Prime Minister: Well, whatever changes will be brought, there will always be some people who will not be satisfied; there will always be grumblings. I have not been given any good reason or example to show that there has been any misdeed in this examination procedure. Therefore, I don't see any reason why it should be freezed. The exam results are there and people will be taken, promoted, according to the number of vacancies that exist, and those who are on top, one after the other, would be selected. This, I have been given assurance.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I am sure the Rt. hon. Prime Minister realises that there is a huge and dangerous credibility gap around that issue. Now, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether there have been arrests, detentions, charges against Police Officers around that issue these last few days?

The Prime Minister: Not so far that I am aware of.

(Interruptions)

I don't know.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since, as rightly pointed out by hon. Ameer Meea, there is a great deal of discontent within the Police Force that there has been some wrongdoing somewhere and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister rightly maybe says - maybe he are right, maybe he is wrong - that there will always be complaints, but in order to ensure that those complaints are not justified, could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister consider setting up an independent body immediately, an *ad hoc* body right now to look at those papers and re-mark all those papers for those who believe that there might have been a wrongdoing somewhere and have suffered from same? In the name of transparency, because even for Bar exams, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister would know, even in United Kingdom and even in Mauritius papers are reviewed and, in this particular instance, such methodology should exist. So, an *ad hoc* committee in order to address this issue!

The Prime Minister: I don't think an *ad hoc* committee can redress such issues. Well, if there is anyone who thinks or believes that injustice has been done to him, he has got other recourse.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister just informed the House that he is not aware of any *maldonne* or grievances. May I inform the House that in the present exercise there have been two cases, one PS, who I will not mention the name, one Police Sergeant who has collapsed twice during the examination and attended by SAMU and taken away, yet when the results were out, he passed the exam, and another Police Sergeant who left the examination only 30 minutes after the exam had started, and to the astonishment of everyone who has sat for this exam, he also has been successful, and this is resulting in much frustration among those who have that for this exam, with BSC holders in it. May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to investigate in this matter and that urgent action be taken so as to relieve these Police Officers who sat for this examination?

The Prime Minister: I think they should all have collapsed and they would all have passed.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Last question on this, hon. Mahomed! You have a question on this? No! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that there are examiners at the DFSC who actually are giving private tuitions to Police Sergeants to take these exams, and if this is the case, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister see to it that this practice is stopped?

The Prime Minister: I will ask the Commissioner of Police to look into this.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesungkur!

PRISONS - DETAINEES - EXPENDITURE

(No. B/142) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the detainees and the prisoners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Prisons, respectively, information as to the present total number thereof, indicating -

- (a) the daily average subsistence cost to Government per head thereof, and
- (b) if, with a view to controlling expenditure, consideration will be given for alternative measures to be taken to deal therewith, including the creation of halfway houses.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Acting Commissioner of Prisons that as at 07 April 2016, there were 2,276 detainees in our prison institutions, out of whom 1,364 were undergoing sentence and 912 were on remand.

On the other hand, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at 07 April 2016, there were 117 detainees in Police cells/detention centres.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, according to Statistics Mauritius, the daily average subsistence cost to Government is around Rs700 per detainee.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that the provisions of the Community Service Order Act and the Probation of Offenders Act are being applied by our Courts as an alternative to

imprisonment. For instance, in 2015, in 562 cases, the accused were sentenced to community service and 341 Probation Orders were issued.

Madam Speaker, another way to bring down prison population is by decreasing the rate of recidivism. In that regard, I wish to inform the House that the Prison Department is stepping up its efforts to curb recidivism. Indeed, pre-release programmes are currently being run by the Prisons Service with the collaboration of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, religious bodies and private enterprises to facilitate the re-integration of detainees into the society upon release.

Moreover, rehabilitation programmes comprising educational, vocational and employment skills are being imparted to detainees in order to empower them to earn a decent living upon their release after completion of their sentence.

Madam Speaker, with a view to reducing the costs of subsistence, the Prisons Department is harnessing avenues to become self-sufficient in areas of primary produce, supply of milk, eggs, and chicken/meat requirements for the prison population.

The Mauritius Prison Service is gearing all its efforts towards off-setting the subsistence costs by 30% through revenue generated by workshop based activities associated with producing/manufacturing of artisanal products, rattan wares, furniture, shoes, garments, production and sale of breads and stationeries.

Madam Speaker, concerning the creation of half-way houses, Government will consider the establishment thereof as a long term reform in the Prisons Service. Consideration will be given in the Vision 2030 blueprint for the setting up of half-way homes under the responsibility of the Prisons Department coupled with the implementation of new rehabilitative pathways in collaboration of NGOs and the private sector.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether there is any – at the Prime Minister's Office, Attorney General's Office – exercise being carried out to see what minor offences which, at this point in time, send people straight to prison, can be reviewed so that for minor offences, especially young people, are not sent straightaway to Beau Bassin? Because we know that *Beau Bassin c'est une usine à criminels*. Somebody comes in on a minor charge, especially the young ones, and when they come out, they are hard criminals. So, are we reviewing the minor offences that could be punished differently from sending, especially youngsters, to prison?

The Prime Minister: Well, for minor offences - I don't know what the hon. Leader of the Opposition means by 'minor offences' - normally, for example, young persons are not even tried in open Court. They are tried in Chambers and most of the time, from my own experience, I know if they are found guilty, they are put on probation. Now, these people comprise of people up to the age of - if I remember rightly - 18 years. Now, for very minor offences, normally there is a...

(Interruptions)

...financial punishment. A fine is imposed. And then, if we still call it 'minor', but a bit more serious, community services are given. I don't know what else we can do. Should we release them all? But one thing I find is that in many cases where people are complaining, for example, the number of crimes that is increasing in this country, we are told that we should make more severe laws, but the severe laws must be applied by those who deliver justice, where Courts have to be severe in order to make it act as a deterrent. I think it is their duty to be as severe as possible. For example, I have seen in certain cases, for the same sort of offence, one Court gives a fine; another Court gives three months' imprisonment; another Court gives one year. I can't understand that. I think we all have a responsibility. It is true that there is independence of the Judiciary, but they are living in this country, they are citizens of this country, they should know what is happening, and they must act in such a way as to help to improve the situation.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/145 addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has been withdrawn. Time is over! Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PASSENGER TERMINAL - REPAIR WORKS

(No. B/153) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the new passenger terminal of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to if, by now, the –

- (a) repair works with regard to the handrails thereat have been completed;
- (b) performance certificate with regard to the main contract therefor has been issued, and
- (c) retention money has been refunded, if any.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by Airport Terminal Operations Ltd. (ATOL) that all outstanding repair works have been attended to except for the replacement of the remaining four, out of the 13 defective glass panes.

The outstanding works being minor, ATOL has, upon recommendation of the Engineer responsible for the Administration of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract and Technical Adviser to ATOL, issued the Performance Certificate and refunded the Retention Money on 15 December 2015.

However, as a measure of security for ATOL, 50% of the Payment Certificate, amounting to some USD383,000, inclusive of VAT, has been retained by ATOL and will be released when all outstanding works are completed.

Further, the contractor has provided ATOL with a new security Bond of USD300,000 valid for a period of two years to cater for remedial works that may be required.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that our airport has gained international recognition for its new infrastructure and enhanced services to boost passenger experience.

It has for two consecutive years (2014 and 2015) been awarded the Best Airport of the African Continent.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that the length of the handrails that were supplied were of 1.5 km and the supplier put only ordinary zinc paint handrails when the contract mentioned stainless steel? That is a huge sum pocketed by the contractor by furnishing stainless steel. Who is responsible to certify that the work was done as per the contract?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member comes with a specific question about the handrails, zinc, etc., I will reply to it, but I can't, just on a question like this, reply on specific matters.

Dr. Sorefan: The handrails are mentioned in the question!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: I replied, Madam Speaker, that all outstanding works have been attended to with the satisfaction of ATOL, the Engineer, etc. Now, if the hon. Member has a specific question about the zinc paint, he can ask and I will reply.

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister look into it? What I am saying is that the handrail is not as per contract.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Will the hon. Member ask a specific question, Madam?

Madam Speaker: So, if the hon. Member asks a specific question, next time he will get the reply. Next Question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT – REVIEW

(No. B/154) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the parastatal bodies, he will state if consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be introduced to the Employment Rights Act with a view to legislate against the current alleged practice of employing people on contract over long periods of time and depriving the latter of the benefits which normally accrue to the employees of the permanent establishment thereof and, if so, indicate when and if not, why not.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, the Employment Rights Act is only applicable to workers of parastatal bodies which are not governed by the Pay Research Bureau.

As I informed the House last week in reply to Parliamentary Question B/128, my Ministry has already embarked on a major review of the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act in line with the decision of the Government to better protect the fundamental rights of the workers. In this context, I have set up a Technical Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry and comprising of the Director of Labour and Industrial Relations and other senior officials of my Ministry. The workers' and the employers' organisations have already submitted their representations to the Technical Committee.

Madam Speaker, I beg leave to file a list of the persons forming part of the Technical Committee.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, in this context, the Technical Committee is also considering the issue of workers on a long-term contract in parastatal bodies whose rights have to be safeguarded.

Madam Speaker, the Technical Committee is presently working on proposed amendments to be brought to the two legislations and in line with the process adopted in 2008 and 2013, the Committee will make its recommendations thereon to a Ministerial Committee. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly by the end of this year.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam. I am glad that the hon. Minister is really considering it. The hon. Minister of Public Utilities said at the last session that people in the CWA are working 10 years, 18 years on contract. This is creating a lot of problems because they can't get loan, etc. It is really creating an insecure family. I am thankful to the Minister, but, please, have it very urgently to this House. Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Surely do.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

SCHOOLS – TEXTBOOKS

(No. B/155) 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 primary and secondary schools, she will state the procedures followed before the –

- (a) textbooks are recommended as curriculum materials therefor, and
- (b) change in the edition of the said textbooks occur.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that textbooks for both primary and lower secondary sectors are developed in line with the National Curriculum Framework. A new Curriculum Framework for grades 1 to 6, developed by the MIE, has been officially launched in December last year.

The textbooks for the primary sector are developed by the Mauritius Institute of Education by a panel consisting of MIE Academic staff, Educators and the Primary Inspectorate. The textbooks undergo a process of validation carried out by a pool of Educators including Union representatives, followed by vetting by Inspectors of the Primary Inspectorate Division and final proofreading by the MIE.

All the pre-press works, including illustrations and layout, are effected at the level of the MIE and the MGI for Asian languages, while the printing and distribution of textbooks are usually undertaken by my Ministry.

As regards the secondary sector, textbooks are selected by the respective secondary schools based on the National Curriculum Framework 2009 and in accordance with a Circular on prescription of textbooks, issued at regular intervals, for the guidance of schools. I am tabling a copy of this circular.

Requests for new textbooks that a school wishes to recommend for use are approved by a High Level Advisory Committee at the Ministry. This approval is based on the recommendations of the subject vetting panels. Schools normally finalise a list of prescribed textbooks and communicate same to the Bookshop Owners Union around the month of July.

As regards the upper secondary sector, a list of prescribed and recommended textbooks is provided by the Cambridge International Examinations and a selection is made by the Textbook Committees at the level of respective schools.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, in the secondary sector, the abovementioned circular on prescription of textbooks is issued to schools and stresses the unnecessary replacement of a textbook by its latest edition in order not to have parents incur undue expenses.

As far as the primary school textbooks are concerned, they are revised in line with the new National Curriculum Framework whenever applicable.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister has herself been in the education sector. There have been over the years - she will agree - complaints regarding the quality of the textbooks. May I request the hon. Minister to look into the possibility of, as was the case with the NCCRD earlier, developing curriculum, looking at the whole issue of textbooks? May I request her to, please, see to it that not only the MIE, but also an appropriate institution like the NCCRD with people with experience in the primary as well as secondary sectors to sit and look into this whole issue of complaints that we have had during the recent years and also to look into this whole issue of curriculum as well at primary and secondary levels?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the NCCRD was previously manned by people coming from the MIE and the Educators. It's true that now the curriculum development is done by the MIE with the help of Educators and officers of the Inspectorate Division. We can always improve on that. The National Curriculum Framework has already been launched last year, in December, for Standards I to VI. The work is being done presently with the help of the Educators of the secondary sector and the MIE. We can always look into means of improving on the set-up.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: There have been complaints recently about delays in obtaining the textbooks, especially at primary level. May I ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter so that this does not repeat for next year?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, last year, with the new curriculum framework, there was a lot of stress on the people doing the printing, but we are looking into the matter and we are trying to make sure that there is no further delay in the priority of the textbooks.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Coming to part (b) of my question, Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister rightly pointed out the undue expenses incurred by parents. I have already tabled copy of two books of physics today. In that same one year, they have got the original and another edition. A new edition was published only because there were two specimen papers included in it. So, we can imagine the cost to the parents. So, I would request the hon. Minister to look into this whole issue of new edition because it appears that there is a sort of a mafia around.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I was made aware of this situation and the Ministry sends circular letters every year to the schools asking the Rectors to make sure that such practices do not recur. But, as far as the textbooks are concerned, we will have to make sure that the school libraries have the latest editions. In case there are one or two pages extra, students can get copies of these done at the level of the school itself.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the hon. Minister state if and when the National History will be properly and fully taught in all educational institutions?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the question put by the hon. Member is not related to the question, but I will still say that in the new Curriculum Development that is being developed for grades VII to IX, we are laying emphasis on the issue of History to be included in the curriculum.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

NATIONAL FORM III ASSESSMENT - ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

(No. B/156) 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 2016 National Form III Examinations on Entrepreneurship, she will state if the curriculum materials and syllabus therefor are ready and, if so, if copy thereof will be tabled.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, currently, students of Form III are assessed on a national basis in 7 subjects under the National Form III Assessment.

For year 2016, the Ministry has decided to include Entrepreneurship Education in the National Form III Assessment.

Madam Speaker, curriculum materials have already been developed by the MIE and textbooks for Forms I to III have been produced equally and are available. A teacher’s guide has been provided for the Educators. Examination syllabus for Entrepreneurship Education illustrating learning objectives and outcomes as well as details of examination modalities have been prepared by the MES. In this context, a handbook has been distributed to schools and is available for consultation on the Ministry’s website.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling the Entrepreneurship Education textbooks as well as Teacher’s Guide for Forms I to III and the examination syllabus for Entrepreneurship Education. The latter is equally available on the website of my Ministry under the National Assessment Form III Handbooks for Schools Rubric.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There were, according to information, quite some delays in the development of this curriculum for the Entrepreneurship Education subject. I would just request the hon. Minister - because the subject is examinable in Form III National Exams - to please ensure that there is *un encadrement* for the students, so that they don’t get unjustly penalised at the end of the year.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the subject was introduced three years back on a pilot basis and since last year it has been run in all schools at Form I and Form II levels. So, we don't think we are going to have any problem. There is no delay, the curriculum material is available, all students in schools do have the books, and I am tabling copies of the books, the Teacher's Guide and the syllabus on the Table of the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, next question hon. Rughoobur!

CAP MALHEUREUX – NHDC COMPLEX – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/157) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the National Housing Development Company complex at Cap Malheureux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to the value and breakdown of the –

- (a) upgrading works carried out thereat over the past five years, and
- (b) remedial works expected to be carried out thereat during the current financial year, indicating if the scope of work thereof has been finalised.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the National Housing Development Co. Ltd (NHDC) that the construction of the housing estate at Cap Malheureux was completed in 1997 and the housing complex comprises 128 apartment-type residential units.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the NHDC has carried out upgrading works in respect of the meter cabins and water reticulation network located thereat. The restoration of the meter cabins was undertaken in 2010 at the cost of one million rupees. The rehabilitation of the water reticulation network was completed in 2014 at the cost of Rs4.8 m.

As regards part (b) of the question, no remedial works would be undertaken during the current financial year. However, the NHDC has floated a tender on 04 April 2016 for consultancy services for waterproofing, painting, repairs to cracks and associated works at Cap Malheureux Housing Estate. The closing date for the submission of bids is 05 May 2016 and it is expected that the contract for consultancy would be awarded by mid-June 2016. The Consultant will be responsible for the survey and preparation of detailed scope of works and

supervision thereof. The rehabilitation works will be undertaken during the next financial year.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for this answer. For the upgrading works that are going to be undertaken, I would just suggest that there is also - as I mentioned in my question of last year - the drain works that have to be completed. So, I would suggest that the hon. Minister takes up the matter with the NHDC shortly.

Mr Soodhun: For sure, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

NEF - SCHOOL MATERIALS

(No. B/158) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the academic year 2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Fund, information as to the name of the supplier of the school materials therefor, indicating the –

- (a) contract value thereof, and
- (b) procurement method used therefor.

Mr Roopun: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that the contract for the procurement and supply of school materials to some 24,200 children of pre-primary, primary, secondary, pre-vocational schools for the academic year 2016 in Mauritius was awarded to Triolet Noble Cooperative Society for a total amount of Rs41,457,600.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Open Advertised Bidding Method of procurement was used for that purpose by the Foundation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: I have one supplementary question, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Minister how the cost has evolved over the years and whether there is any appropriate mechanism in place for quality control?

Mr Roopun: Madam Speaker, insofar as the quality of the products distributed is concerned, I must say that for the last exercise we enlisted the support of the Mauritius

Standards Bureau both at the level of the selection process and also during distribution. Samples were collected to ensure that quality as per sample was being distributed, and also during distribution, samples were collected to check the quality.

Insofar as the amount spent is concerned, I must say that, for example, in 2010, it cost about Rs22 m. But, year after year, the amount increased substantially and for the last exercise in 2014, for academic year 2015, it reached Rs70 m. It more than tripled. But, then, we went on with a Social Register and now it is about Rs41 m., as I intimated.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

MAHEBOURG & PLAINE MAGNIEN - WATER PIPES - REPLACEMENT

(No. B/159) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the project for the replacement of the old water pipes under the Build Mauritius Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, a list of the regions identified in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien therefor, indicating the time frame set for the implementation thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the CWA that three pipe replacement projects under the Build Mauritius Fund will be implemented in the regions of Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, namely –

- (i) the renewal of 12 km of pipeline from, of course, Riche en Eau, Grand Bel Air to Ville Noire. Works are expected to start in November 2016 and to be completed by June 2018;
- (ii) replacement of some 13 km of pipeline in the village of Plaine Magnien. Works are expected to start in September 2016, and
- (iii) the replacement of some 10 km of pipeline in Rose Belle, Ballisson and Beau Vallon as from February 2017. CWA will appoint a consultant for the detailed design and supervision of the works.

Mr Jhugroo: Due to the irregular water supply in the southern region, as just mentioned by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, would he consider giving urgent consideration to remedy the situation by sending lorries to replenish water, if possible, everywhere?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, that is a general system which is put in place. Of course, it is not a very advantageous system, but if there are any particular problems, CWA does send tankers as and when necessary.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, under this Build Mauritius Fund for this specific project of replacement of old water pipes, what is the budget available as a whole for that project and whether there has been a general survey for the replacement of pipes around the island? I am asking for Rose-Hill region where people are facing a lot of hardship these days.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan, the question relates to Constituency No. 12. I would advise you to come with a substantive question on the Build Mauritius Fund.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will limit myself to this question about Constituency No.12. Reference is made to the amount from the Build Mauritius Fund. May I know how much money from that Fund is being used and whether there is any money from any source other than Build Mauritius Fund that is being used to replace pipes?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem, I will say the same thing; that this question relates to Constituency No.12. If your question relates only to Constituency No.12, there is no problem, but if it is of a general nature concerning the Fund, then better come with a substantive question. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister reply?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, I have the figures with me. Now, first of all, what we've got to be cleared is that there is a grant from Government to the CWA and this grant is for the implementation of Pipe Replacement Project, including the three that I have mentioned. Now, this is funded from the Build Mauritius Fund. The amount for these three projects in Constituency No. 12 is as follows –

- (i) Rs120 m. during the period November 2016 to June 2018 (if you want to have further details, the preparation of bid documents are in progress, design preparation of bid document and supervision being undertaken in-house by CWA);

- (ii) Plaine Magnien Phase I - the second project that I have mentioned - the estimated project value is Rs120 m. implementation during the period September 2016 to January 2018, and
- (iii) Plaine Magnien again, that is, Rose Belle/Balisson/Beau Vallon, 10 kms, and cost is estimated at Rs130 m.

So, we will just add up and it comes at about Rs360-Rs370 m.

Madam Speaker: No further question! The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: PQ B/172 and PQ B/188. I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM - DELEGATION

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, before proceeding with the business of the House, I am pleased to announce the presence in our midst this afternoon of a delegation comprising of five Speakers from the SADC countries accompanied by the Secretary General of SADC Parliamentary Forum, Dr. Chiviya.

On behalf of hon. Members and in my own personal name, I extend a warm welcome to the delegation and wish them a pleasant stay in Mauritius.

BLUE BAY PUBLIC BEACH – AMENITIES - UPGRADING

(No. B/160) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the Blue Bay public beach, he will state if consideration will be given for –

- (a) an increase in the parking capacity therefor;
- (b) the installation of an adequate lighting system thereat, and
- (c) the embellishment and rehabilitation thereof, including the planting of trees thereat.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Beach Authority has already initiated action for the provision of 52 additional parking spaces (42 for cars and 10 for buses) at Blue Bay public beach. It is expected that a contract will be awarded for the works by the end of this month.

With regard to part (b) of the question, provision is being made for the installation of additional stand-alone solar lighting systems during the next financial year.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the Beach Authority has already taken the following measures –

- (i) works have already started for the upgrading of amenities such as toilet blocks which also includes the construction of additional block to cater for the disabled and are expected to be completed by the end of April 2016;
- (ii) bids have already been launched on 21 March 2016 for the following works –
 - (a) construction of French drains and soakaway to cater for surface water run-off following heavy rainfall and to prevent erosion of the public beach, and
 - (b) creation of a trading zone through demolition of existing abandoned buildings.
- (iii) planting of trees by the end of this financial year.

Mr Jhugroo: Would the hon. Minister consider rehabilitating and upgrading the public beach of Blue Bay like that of La Cuvette and Bain Boeuf?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: In fact, hon. Dayal has already started something on the beach everywhere and we are just carrying on to do the upgrading there.

Mr Jhugroo: Would the hon. Minister consider upgrading the public toilet of Blue Bay with a regular and adequate water supply during the renovation?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: It is already on the way for the upgrading of all the systems pertaining to the beaches.

RDA - LEGAL ADVISERS - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/161) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Road Development Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information

as to the legal advisers whose services are presently being retained thereat, indicating in each case the –

- (a) date of appointment thereof, and
- (b) fees payable thereto, indicating the amount thereof claimed and paid as at to date.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that a panel of several legal advisers offered their services to the RDA for different assignments since December 2014.

I am further informed that Mr Subhash Lallah, the former Legal Adviser of the RDA was paid a total amount of Rs931,500 as legal fees (including Attorney fees) for services rendered from December 2014 to end September 2015. Another amount of Rs460,000 has been paid to him for the period October 2015 to date for legal services provided to the RDA in respect of pending litigations.

I am further informed by the RDA that in April 2015, following the setting up of an Investigative Committee in the context of the embankment failure of the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road, the RDA retained the services of Mr Ravin Chetty as Chairperson against the payment of legal fees amounting to Rs115,000. The Investigative Committee established that there was professional neglect pursuant to which a Disciplinary Committee was set up.

Consequently, in August 2015, Mr Avinash Sunassee, Counsel, was appointed as Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee against the payment of Rs57,500 in relation to the disciplinary proceedings instituted against Messrs Nubheebuccus and Mr Jugoo, ex-Divisional Manager and ex-Senior Manager of the RDA respectively. This led to the dismissal of both officers. Mr Lallah represented the RDA and was paid an amount of Rs115,000. He was assisted in the case by Mr Trilochun against the payment of Rs57,500.

I am further informed that, in December 2015, the RDA invited bids from five Chambers for the provision of legal services. However, the only bid received was from Trilochun Chambers and, consequently, the Board of the RDA, at the meeting of 29 January 2016, approved the appointment of Trilochun Chambers as Legal Advisers for a monthly fee of Rs40,000 (including Attorney fees) for a period of three years, as from February 2016.

Madam Speaker, the rates of the present Legal Adviser are practically the same as the former Legal Adviser of RDA, that is, Mr Lallah. As to date, Trilochun Chambers has assisted the RDA in the following cases -

- Bheenick against the State of Mauritius;
- Nabeebaccus against RDA, and
- Independent Review Panel case.

But no claim has been put so far and no payment has been effected to Trilochun Chambers till date.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is a coincidence that Trilochun Chambers or Trilochun is a relative of the Minister?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, there were five Chambers which were requested to present their bids and the Board decided. The retainer fee is Rs40,000 for a counsel and for an Attorney per month.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has not replied that Mr Trilochun is his brother-in-law. It is known. It is a fact. Is it not surprising that Mr Trilochun is not only the legal adviser of RDA, but also the legal adviser in other parastatals where the hon. Minister is responsible. This is causing a lot of anger within the legal profession and within Members of Parliament - I won't give names - even on Government side. So, he is having ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: I have already replied to this question, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the hon. Member what are the other parastatal bodies that fall under the aegis of my Ministry where he has been asked to offer his services.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister mentioned the names of Subhas Chandra Lallah and Ravin Chetty who are Senior Counsels of a number of years at the Bar. So, may I know from the hon. Minister how many years standing at the Bar has Mr Trilochun?

Mr Bodha: I think he was called to the Bar in England in the year 2000; a few years later.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has asked me a question concerning other parastatal bodies. *Il ne perd rien pour attendre. Quelques questions parlementaires vont être déposées au bureau du Clerk dans les jours à venir.*

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

RING ROAD - REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. B/162) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Port Louis Ring Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the rehabilitation works being carried out thereat, indicating the –

- (a) cost thereof and the amount thereof paid as at to date;
- (b) names of the consultants therefor, indicating the fees payable thereto and the fees paid as at to date;
- (c) name of the contractor thereof and;
- (d) expected -
 - (i) completion date thereof, and
 - (ii) date of coming into operation thereof.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that the Ring Road Phase 1 was practically completed on 31 January 2013. However, during a pre-final visit effected from 20 to 24 January 2014, that is, within the Defects Liability Period of one year, the Consultant, Arab Consulting Engineers (ACE) from Egypt, notified the contractor, Joint Venture Rehm-Grinaker-Colas, of defects noted during the preceding one-year period.

Madam Speaker, of particular concern were cracks and settlement observed over a stretch of about 75m of road in a high fill zone supported by a reinforced earth retaining wall. Later, around end of February, beginning of March 2014, that stretch of the road collapsed completely following the sliding movement of the retaining wall.

Madam Speaker, the part of the road that collapsed is on a ‘design and build’ basis by the contractor, Joint Venture Rehm-Grinaker-Colas. As the collapse occurred during the Defects Liability Period, in line with the conditions of the contract, the contractor is totally responsible for the remedial works. However, the contractor refused to accept full liability in the beginning, but afterwards decided to honour its obligations and to carry out the repair works as per the conditions of the contract. The clearing and temporary works started as from April 2014.

Consequently, the contractor appointed ARQ (Pty) Ltd from South Africa to do the forensic investigations and testing.

I am informed by the RDA that the rehabilitation works, which started in October 2014, are ongoing, and that the overall progress of works is around 50%. The following works have been completed so far -

- all the piling works at the collapsed zone;
- all the precast reinforced concrete panels have been casted;
- 370 reinforced concrete panels have also been erected on site, and
- 24 out of 128 ground steel anchors have been installed and awaiting pre-stressing.

Additionally, the testing and checking of the reinforced earth panels at other locations are ongoing.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that the cost of the above remedial works is around Rs281m. It is to be noted that the RDA has not released the performance bond of the contractor to the tune of Rs115 m. and it also has in its custody an amount of Rs42 m. representing retention money. The cost of the remedial works will be met from that sum, which is a total of Rs158 m.

However, I should like to inform the House that no disbursement has been made to the contractor for the remedial works so far.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the repair works undertaken by the contractor are being supervised by ARQ (Pty) Ltd on behalf of the contractor and Arab Consulting Engineers (ACE) on behalf of RDA. ARQ is being paid by the contractor and ACE is being paid by RDA from the abovementioned sum, representing the total amount of the performance bond and the retention money presently in the custody of RDA. The fees paid to ACE till date for the supervision of rehabilitation works are USD 352,000 and MUR 1 million.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question, the contractor for the Ring Road Phase 1 project is Joint Venture Rehm-Grinaker-Colas.

As regards part (d) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that the expected completion date of the project is at August 2016. The project was delayed due to the following reasons -

- (i) it is the first time that such works are being carried out in Mauritius;

- (ii) because of the complexity of the site as regards to site geology and rock structure;
- (iii) problems in drilling and fixing procedures for anchors;
- (iv) procurement of new casing of bigger diameter to avoid the pull out of tendons together with the casing, and
- (v) bad climatic conditions.

I am also informed that the road is already operational up to the Swami Vivekananda International Conference Centre. The rehabilitated segment of the road is not used by traffic. It will be required only when Phase 2 of the Ring Road project is completed.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to the leg which is not operational, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the RDA has some supervision? It is now used, everybody knows - and complaints have been received from the inhabitants of Les Guibies - as a racetrack for racing cars. Can the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, responsible of RDA, let us know what action the RDA has taken to have, at least, a sort of control over that part?

Mr Bodha: Well, the RDA is doing what it can as regards that segment, but also supervising the works. Now that the hon. Member has mentioned the issue of racing, I will certainly ask the RDA and the police to see into the matter.

Mr Bhagwan: Following the recent heavy rains, a survey has been effected by the RDA with the consultant following representations made by the inhabitants of Les Guibies, because it is lower down and there have been some problems of water leakages. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether site visits have been made, any report has been prepared, and whether the inhabitants have been informed?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, we have an engineer, who is a site engineer, onsite where the works are being done. I have not visited the site for long, and I am planning, in fact, to have a site visit to see how the works are going on. It will be an opportunity to talk to the inhabitants of the locality, to see whether there are any problems which are linked with the rehabilitation works.

Mr Bérenger: Since we have been given a date for the completion of the works, I take it that we are talking about the remedial works. As the hon. Minister pointed out, all these remedial works will end up at the foot of the mountain. Can we know, on the horizon, what do we see, when we can expect the tunnel or tunnels - because I heard him say that there would be two tunnels - to go on and on the other side of the mountain as well?

Mr Bodha: The Decongestion Programme is being finalised. We have an inter-ministerial committee meeting on Thursday, and Cabinet will be apprised of the programme very soon. We expect works to start at the end of this year.

Mr Bhagwan: We all know what happened at the RDA during past years concerning the quality of control by the engineers themselves. There are cases in Court and so on. Can the hon. Minister inform the House and give assurance to the population, the taxpayers, that the RDA has actually sufficient qualified engineers to supervise these ongoing rehabilitation works and not relying 100% on consultants? We all know the reputation of some consultants, and we know what happened during the first Phase. Can the hon. Minister reassure the House whether the RDA has sufficient qualified engineers and whether he is in the process of recruiting new engineers?

Mr Bodha: The comment of the hon. Member is right. We cannot be at the mercy of consultants, the more so when we choose the lowest bidder, which I think was the case in this project. In fact, the RDA has a problem of capacity building. We have sent six engineers to China for a period of five months, in fact, to work onsite on a number of projects regarding tunnels and bridges in view of the Decongestion Programme implementation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, last question on this!

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Minister has mentioned that only 50% of the work has been done up-to-date in two years' time, from 2014 to 2016. That means another two years to finish the other 50% and, as per the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when work will start for the tunnel, I see that it would take another four years, and you have already signed an agreement, G2G (Government to Government) with South Korea. So, it will take a long time the way things are. I think the hon. Minister should...

Madam Speaker: Don't make a statement, please!

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Minister see to it that the contractor, although the hon. Minister has mentioned all the climatic situation, that they really finish the work in a time delay - don't give them the freehand to finish it - so that we can start with the tunnel?

Mr Bodha: In fact, the date which was given to me was April and then it was May. Now, the date being given to me is August. I understand that it is a very complex site and the works that we are doing with the fixing of the casings, tendons because this is a rare case of rehabilitation works, but I also want things to be done as fast as we can. And as regards the

decongestion, I am confident that we will come very soon with a proper project with the detailed design.

Mr Bérenger: From what I understood, we are in trouble because we chose the cheapest consultant. Is that the case? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this is really the case or whether was not the problem that the funding agency shortlisted the consultants?

Mr Bodha: Well, it could have been.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, next question!

ÉBÈNE CYBER CITY PARKING SPACE PROJECT

(No. B/163) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Ebène Cyber City, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited, information as to -

- (a) the number of presently unoccupied plots, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) names of the lessee/s thereof, and
 - (ii) project submitted for implementation thereat, indicating the timeframe thereof;
- (b) where matters stand as to the Parking Space Project therefor, indicating the expected date of coming into operation thereof and number of parking slots, and
- (c) if any traffic plan is being prepared for implementation thereat.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited that there are presently no unoccupied plots at Ebene Cyber City. All 78 plots of land in the Cyber City at Ebene, amounting to a total surface area of 112.3 acres have been leased prior to the coming into office of this Government. However, plots leased to the following State-owned Enterprises, namely Mauritius Post Ltd., Mauritius Telecom Ltd. and State Bank of Mauritius Ltd. have not yet been developed. Moreover, a plot of land leased to the Indian High Commission has also not yet been developed.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited has received six project proposals respectively from -

- (i) BR Capital Ltd.,

- (ii) Ibiza Investment New Indigo Development,
- (iii) Kingsgate Holdings Ltd.,
- (iv) Nex Ltd.,
- (v) Centreview Ltd., and
- (vi) B & S Park for the construction of office blocks during 2016 and 2017.

With regard to parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited launched an invitation to potential bidders in December 2012 and an award was made in June 2013 to a joint venture. A lease agreement was signed on 01 August 2014 and, following advice received from Mr Dheerendra Dabee, the Solicitor General, the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited is considering assigning the lease to a special purpose vehicle.

I am further informed that the promoter for the car park project has obtained a Traffic Impact Assessment clearance, including a Traffic Plan from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit. I cannot indicate the date of coming into operation of the parking space project. All I can say at this stage is that if the project goes ahead, it would accommodate more than 800 car parks. Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, since, this is the third Parliamentary Question that I am asking on this issue of Ebène Cyber City. For those who reside there, those who know the region, the situation is very bad to worst. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has discussed the matter with the BPML, not only concerning traffic, parking, security problem of those working there, thousands of workers, hawkers - there have been some minor works which have been carried out - but can the hon. Minister, at least, let us know whether he has discussed or he is planning to discuss with the BPML ways and means until this parking project will be operational? What are the concrete actions which the BPML intends to take just to relieve the workers working there of the problems they are encountering?

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, as you will appreciate, I have only been Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation since mid-March and, although I have been there three weeks only, I would like to remind the House that the first lease at the Cyber City was granted as far back as 2003 at a time when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister and the hon. Member was Minister of Environment.

(Interruptions)

So, my point is that if the problem has lasted 13 years and has been just growing, I think the new Minister can be given some more time, but I can reassure the hon. Member that I have already called the Chief Executive Officer of BPML.

(Interruptions)

I beg your pardon?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Sorry! Address the Chair, please!

Mr Sinatambou: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to reassure the House that I have already met the Chief Executive of the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., especially with regard to this car park space. But I would like also to share with the House that, as a normal citizen of this country, when I look at the site where the parking space is planned, I, myself, have doubts whether it should be there, but if that is the wish of the Board and of the company, we will have to proceed accordingly. But, as I say, I think I could be given some more time. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bhagwan: Since the hon. Minister has reminded me that we were in Government...

Madam Speaker: Can you give me one minute, hon. Bhagwan? Hon. Jhugroo, and then I will come back to you.

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can we know whether every plot is of the same size, the area of a plot, the amount paid as rent for each plot and whether all lessees are paying the rent?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, I certainly have the total surface area of the Cyber City, which is, as I said earlier, 112.3 acres. What I can also tell the House is that the plots are not all of the same surface area. Those 78 plots, I understand, are being serviced more or less regularly by the lessees, but I don't have the specific details as to any of the defaulters, if there are any. If the hon. Member can come with a substantive question, I will be very happy to reply.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, first!

Mr Bérenger: Since the hon. Minister has told us that he has recently met the Chief Executive of Business Parks of Mauritius, can we have the name and qualification of the person concerned and an up-to-date list of Board Members of the Business Parks of Mauritius be circulated?

Mr Sinatambou: Yes, I don't have the details now, but I will certainly circulate it. As a matter of fact, I do believe that this is public information because it is a limited company and, therefore,...

(Interruptions)

It should be up-to-date. It should be at the Registrar of Companies like any other company.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Sinatambou: Like any other company, whenever there is any change in the directorship it would be communicated at the Registrar of Companies.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you had a question?

Mr Bhagwan: Since the hon. Minister has reminded me that I was in Government from 2000 to 2005 with the MSM and MMM Government, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister was also the Prime Minister and other colleagues there. So, may I then remind the hon. Minister that he was Minister under the Labour Government responsible for IT until he was kicked out by Dr. Ramgoolam. Can he inform the House what did he do when he was Minister instead of reminding us what we have done, and today we have the Cyber City?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, do you want to reply?

Mr Sinatambou: I think I should, in front of so many accusations.

(Interruptions)

Maybe I will have to remind the then Minister that I was elected the best IT Minister of Africa!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Instead of having this back and forth little exercise of him trying to say that it is not his fault, could the hon. Minister look into something which is very, very important - maybe not *banal* for him, but I am sure, maybe, he

will recognise that it is important? Every single pavement that exists within the Cyber City can no longer be used by pedestrians because each and every place where there should be a pavement, cars are being parked upon those spaces, therefore forcing people to walk on the roads. Hence, a serious traffic hazard! Could the hon. Minister look into that possibility of, at least, having those pavements freed up for pedestrians to be able to move around the Cyber City without them being run over by cars?

Mr Sinatambou: I certainly share the hon. Member's concern, Madam Speaker. All I have been saying is: "for 13 years nothing has been done, give me 13 weeks, at least!"

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, next question!

SUGAR – PRICE

(No. B/164) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to sugar, he will state the –

- (a) actual price thereof on the European market;
- (b) price paid to the Mauritian producers thereof, and
- (c) increase granted in the price thereof to the small planters thereof, if any.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate that the price of sugar prevailing in the European market as last published on the official website of the EU Commission in January 2016, was 429 Euros per ton for white refined sugar produced by the EU Member States.

I am further advised that the average CIF price obtained by the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate for our sugar exported to the EU for Crop 2015 is 459 Euros for refined white and 712 Euros for Special Sugars. The average price per ton of sugar exported by the MSS, that is the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, is, therefore, 515 Euros.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the ex-Syndicate price payable to Mauritian producers, including the small planters, for Crop 2015 is estimated at Rs13,000 per ton of

sugar. As at to date, the crop advance is Rs12,150 per ton for small planters and Rs12,000 for the corporate sector.

The ex-Syndicate price paid to the producers is arrived at by deducting all the expenses incurred by the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate from the total revenue which, *inter alia*, include the following –

- (i) freight rate;
- (ii) storage fees;
- (iii) consumables;
- (iv) refining service fee;
- (v) manufacturing Premium payable for production of Special Sugars
- (vi) global cess, and
- (vii) administrative expenses of the MSS.

I would like to inform the House that the price per ton of sugar accrued for Crop 2014 was Rs12,694 compared to Rs17,573 in 2012 and Rs15,030 in 2013.

The main reason for the drop in price in 2014 was that the market had already reacted to the announcement of the EU regarding the abolition of sugar production quotas as from 2017. This has had a major impact in the reduction of the price of sugar in the EU market.

As the House is aware, for Crop 2014 this Government had, through the Sugar Insurance Fund, come to the rescue of the sugar industry by waiving the insurance premium for Crop 2014 and granting a special assistance of Rs2,000 per ton of sugar to the planters as recommended in an actuarial report. Conscious of the vulnerability of the small planters, that is, those producing up to 60 tons of sugar, provision was made for an additional assistance of Rs1,400 per ton of sugar accruing to them. For Crop 2015, Government had already decided to provide an assistance of Rs2,000 per ton of sugar to all planters.

The revenue stream from sugar production comprises a number of components and these include -

- (i) molasses;
- (ii) Bagasse Transfer Price Fund;
- (iii) Distiller/Bottler's fee, and

(iv) fair-trade.

In 2015, Government took a major decision to set up a Sugarcane Sustainability Fund to provide for an additional compensation to the planters for the bagasse that they produce. For Crop 2015, the planters have already benefited from a sum of Rs1,100 per ton of sugar for the first 60 tons. For all production above 60 tons, the planters have benefited from Rs300 per ton of sugar, over and above, Rs125 for the Bagasse Transfer Price Fund.

Therefore, Government is trying to do everything humanly possible to keep the small planters viable. The viability price of the small planters stands at around Rs16,000 per ton of sugar. With all the revenue streams and assistance provided, the estimated revenue of sugar would arrive at around Rs19,000 for Fairtrade planters and Rs17,200 for other planters.

My Ministry will bring necessary amendments to the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act shortly to, among others, set up the Sugarcane Sustainability Fund and increase the Distiller/Bottler's Fee by Rs20 per litre.

Mr Bérenger: I am given to understand that some time back - not that far back – the Sugar Syndicate was marketing, selling all the sugar produced in Mauritius, whereas now certain producers make their own arrangements, to their advantage, in UK and elsewhere. Can I know whether this is the case, how does that stand under the law, and how are the planters and other people concerned informed?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, as at to date, the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate is the sole institution responsible for the selling of our sugar overseas.

Mr Mahomed: Madam Speaker, my question pertains to land under sugarcane cultivation. Would the hon. Minister be able to indicate to the House, since ever he assumed office in December 2014, what kind of trend are we experimenting insofar as the cultivation is concerned? Is it on the rise, is it on the decline or is it stable?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, in a previous PQ, I did inform the House that over the last five years, we have seen constant decline in the surface area under sugarcane cultivation, but our aim is to stop that trend and to, at least, ensure that we have 50,000 hectares of land under sugarcane to keep on producing at least 400,000 tons of sugar and also have enough bagasse for our energy production plant.

Mr Bhagwan: From the figures given by the hon. Minister, we have the EU prices for Crop 2015 which have gone up by some 60 Euros, that is, Rs2,400 per ton. Why then the

price for Crop 2015 in comparison with Crop 2014 has moved only by Rs300? Can the hon. Minister, at least, inform the House whether according to him, the Sugar Syndicate has properly done its work and, according to me, has failed in its mission to secure the best price? The Sugar Syndicate has not done its best to secure the best price. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has enquired into that. I would say the small planters are all suffering.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, currently the Sugar Syndicate has a contract agreement with two main suppliers in Europe: Cristalco in France and British Sugars in the UK. I am informed that they had a forward contract already in place last year for Crop 2015, and at the time that they agreed on the price, it was based on the market price. Since then, there has been evolution in the price because overall, the sugar market, there has been a decline in the supply and this has put pressure on the price to go up. Unfortunately, it is true that, at the time that the agreement was made, the price was at the lower level and given that they had already made an agreement to secure the supply at that given price, they have in a way been penalised.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister say if he has discussed the matter with the sugar syndicate going deeply into how they have managed to come to such a situation?

Mr Seeruttun: Again, Madam Speaker, I had asked the question how come that they did not foresee that there would be some kind of increase in the price, but then again, they are the experts, they are the ones who have agreed upon the price and they felt that it was the best price they could get at that time, but these are things that happen, unfortunately.

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Ameer Meea!

NATIONAL PROPERTY FUND LIMITED – ASSETS & LIABILITIES

(No. B/165) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the National Property Fund Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, the –

- (a) staff list thereof, indicating the respective post occupied and the respective salary, allowances and other benefits drawn;
- (b) composition of the Board thereof, indicating the respective allowances and other benefits drawn by each member thereof, and

(c) value of the assets and liabilities thereof, as at to date.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): With your permission, I am going to answer this particular Parliamentary Question.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply to PQ B/967 of 24 November 2015, where the substantive Minister stated that the National Property Fund Limited is a company incorporated under the Companies Act and in accordance with section 210 (1) of the said Act, the National Property Fund Limited has to submit its audited financial statements to the Registrar of Companies not later than six months after the Balance Sheet date. The hon. Member can have access to the information requested with the Registrar of Companies at the time the National Property Fund Limited will file its accounts.

Mr Ameer Meea: We all know that the accounts of a private company are filed with the Registrar, but this is filed once a year for the Balance Sheet date. My question was about as at to date. Fair enough! I don't think the hon. Minister will have the answer as he is not the substantive Minister. But can I ask him, in relation to parts (a) and (b) of the question, we do not have any answer?

Mr Soodhun: I think that all these information my hon. friend can have them, as I mentioned, at the Registrar of Companies. Every information will be submitted before 31 December 2016.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the question is specific. I asked about the respective salary, allowances and benefits drawn. This is not found in the published accounts. Anyway, if the hon. Minister does not have the answer, can I ask him whether all these costs, all these allowances, benefits, etc, are being financed from public funds or from the sale of assets of BAI?

Mr Soodhun: I think that all the information, the complete financial statement which my hon. friend is looking for, he will definitely have them before 31 December 2016. I am sure that he will have the satisfaction before 31 December.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Our good friend, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, has said that he knows those issues by heart. Can I just ask him to please reconsider his position? Because it is clear that the law does not in any way consist of filing of staff names, positions occupied, respective salaries and allowances. This is quite obvious and trite law. So, in the light of this, could he reconsider the possibility of tabling it? If he does not have it here, undertake to table this in the course of the day or even during the week because this is information that is not and never will be available at the Registrar of Companies. It is unheard-of. Please!

Mr Soodhun: I will advise my hon. friend, if he does not get all information by 31 December 2016, he can come again with a Parliamentary Question, and I am sure that we will give him.

Mr Bérenger: I don't know if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is following what's happening. This National Property Fund has been set up to siphon money from all over the place in the BAI saga affair and now when this has taken place, it is treated as a simple any other company so that we won't have any information now although it is directly linked to the BAI saga and to the people who are waiting to be paid outside.

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I am governed by the Companies Act and according to the Act, we have to submit it to the Registrar of Companies.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Taking up from where the hon. Leader of the Opposition has stopped, one of the questions in this PQ was about the assets and liabilities as at to date and the reason we would like and are insisting on an answer is because, by the end of June, in two months' time, this same company has to fork out billions of rupees

- not millions - to pay Super Cash Back Gold. So, we want to know as at today, does this company have the money or are they taking these people for a ride?

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, I mentioned all this will be submitted to the Registrar of Companies and they will have it; it will be open.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order! I do not know how to phrase it, whether it should be a point of order, but what I am trying to get at here is maybe if you, Madam Speaker, I know you cannot have any control on the answers given by the hon. Minister, but if the hon. Minister is grossly misguided by people sending him little papers or people sitting next to him and telling him that staff and salary and positions are filed at the Registrar of Companies, I plead to you, Madam Speaker, if you could please redirect him and put him on the right track because this is unheard-of, this not in the law.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has well stated that I don't have any control on the reply of Ministers.

(Interruptions)

I don't have any control, I can't advise him. It's up to him to reply or not. The hon. Member has asked his question. That's fair! If the Minister wants, he can reply. If he doesn't want, I can't force him to reply. Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

AGALEGA ISLAND – AIRPORT & JETTY – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/166) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Agalega Island, he will state –

- (a) where matters stand as to the proposed construction of a new airport and jetty facilities thereat, as announced in the last budget speech, and
- (b) if he will accede to the request of the hon. Member for his Ministry to organize a visit thereto of the elected members of the National Assembly of the constituency of which it is part thereof.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): Madam Speaker, with regard to the proposed construction of a new airport and jetty facilities at Agalega Island, a team of three experts carried out a preliminary visit to

Agalega Island and submitted their Initial Assessment Report to the Joint Project Monitoring Committee chaired by the substantive Minister which recommended the appointment of a consultant for detailed site investigations and preparation of a Draft Report Project.

The Joint Project Managing Committee (JPMC) met on 29 February 2016 and the way ahead presented by the Implementing Agency was to carry out detailed site investigations, preparation of DPR and the implementation of plan was ratified by the JPMC during that meeting.

The JPMC further directed the Implementing Agency to formulate Terms of Reference for appointment of a consultant for detailed site and investigation and preparation of Detailed Project Report.

The Draft Terms of Reference was formulated in accordance with the directives of the JPMC and vetted by the Implementing Agency on 16 February 2016.

The modalities of appointment of the consultant who would be undertaking detailed site investigations and formulation of the DPR is underway and this activity is expected to commence as early as possible.

The Ministry, in collaboration with the Outer Island Development Corporation (OICD), is closely monitoring and steering each stage of progress to ensure timely and successful completion of the project. This project will ensure safe and all-round connectivity between mainland Mauritius and Agaléga and will also improve the facilities provided to the people of Agaléga many fold. It would also present new opportunities for further economic and social development of Agaléga Island and the Republic of Mauritius.

As regards part (b) of the question, I very much appreciate and warmly welcome the proposal of the hon. Member to visit Agaléga.

However, I wish to inform all hon. Members of this House that Agaléga Island, being part of the Republic of Mauritius, any Mauritian citizen is free to travel to Agaléga, subject to the availability of passenger seats on board of M/S Mauritius Trochetia travelling to and from Agaléga.

The House may also wish to note that currently, the Dornier flies to Agaléga in case of emergencies, in view of the current state of the airstrip. The Dornier can take only two persons on the Mauritius-Agaléga leg and three to four persons on the Agaléga-Mauritius leg.

The recommendable means to go to Agaléga for the time being is by ship. A voyage of M/S Mauritius Trochetia to Agaléga is tentatively scheduled for 28 May 2016.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister for Agaléga and outer islands, but the development of Agaléga will go directly through the upgrade of its airstrip and its jetty and this has been very long on the cards. Since ten years, we have been debating this in the House. May I ask the hon. Minister to convey to his colleague who is not here to really speed up matters and see to it that at least the tenders are launched so that these people can be relieved? Because if there is no jetty, no airstrip, there will be no development in Agaléga.

Mr Callichurn: I do understand the concern of the hon. Member. I will surely pass on the message.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know the jetty well because as Government Engineer I have been there twice to repair the jetty following tidal waves. Hon. Jhugroo was the Chairman of the OIDC, but in those days, the Development Works Corporation could intervene rapidly so that goods could be unloaded so as to feed the population of Agaléga. I know the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister, but what kind of arrangement is available right now should there be a damage to the jetty so that vital services could be provided to the population there?

Mr Callichurn: For the jetty, I don't have the information the hon. Member sought for at the moment, but I will pass on the message.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister - I know he is not the substantive Minister - confirm to the House whether there has been any consultancy done with regard to the jetty or any port development that had taken place years back, I think in year 2003?

Madam Speaker: He is not the substantive Minister!

Mr Callichurn: I am not aware.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: In the answer that the hon. Minister just gave in relation to Members of Parliament visiting Agaléga, I just have to tell the hon. Minister that this has not been the practice during the last mandate. As the hon. Minister is aware, because Agaléga forms part of Constituency No.3., I have made an official request last time, and the then Prime Minister acceded to my request, and I did visit Agaléga by Dornier together with hon. Mohamed. I don't see why now this is so different! So, I would ask my hon. friend to convey the message to the substantive Minister to make an effort so that we, as Members of Parliament, go and visit our constituents there. I mean really to make an effort instead of making efforts elsewhere like the rearing of *Barbara*, where we have seen what has happened recently.

(Interruptions)

So, can the hon. Minister convey the right message to the substantive Minister? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: From the little I know, if a request is made to that effect, it will be acceded to.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesungkur!

SUGAR SECTOR - EU ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

(No. B/167) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the restructuring of the sugar sector, he will state the amount of funds obtained by the Government of Mauritius from the European Development Fund in the wake of the EU Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol countries as at to date, indicating how the funds have been applied, indicating -

- (a) the amount thereof that has benefitted the small planters, and
- (b) if a study has been carried out by his Ministry to determine the efficiency of the application thereof and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan for the sugar cluster for the period 2006-2015 was supported under the Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries and aimed at empowering the sugar cane industry to face the challenges caused by the EU Sugar Reform of 2005 whereby the price of sugar exported to EU market would be reduced by 36%.

Funds to the tune of approximately 230 million Euros have been obtained from the European Commission as General Budget Support as at date to finance the reform programme.

The EU Support to the Government's 10-year Economic Reform Programme is based on a combination of Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol (AMSP) plus EDF funds.

It is understood that the total amount allocated under these two programmes come to some 278 million Euros for Mauritius, out of a total of 1.25 billion Euros earmarked by the EU for the Sugar Protocol countries.

A Sugar Reform Trust (SRT) was accordingly set up to disburse to the corporate sector, an amount of 94 million Euros agreed between the then Government and the corporate sector, to enable the latter to meet the costs associated with the Voluntary Retirement Scheme, Early Retirement Scheme and Blueprint, that is, closure of factories. Since all the funds have already been disbursed to the corporate sector, the Sugar Reform Trust (SRT) has been wound up in 2013.

Provisions have also been made in successive Government Budgets for the implementation of the Field Operations Regrouping and Irrigation Project, commonly known as FORIP, to improve the competitiveness of small holders of land under sugar cane cultivation, through effective regrouping, de-rocking and planting of small planters' field and the implementation of the irrigation projects.

The aim of FORIP was to cover 12000 hectares of land during the period 2006 to 2015. The objective of FORIP was two-fold, i.e. -

- (i) increase productivity by 20 to 25 %, and
- (ii) reducing expenditure by 20 %.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the total funds disbursed under the FORIP amount to Rs3.2 billion.

As at date, a total of 9,700 hectares have been covered and the total number of planters who have benefitted from the project is 9,935.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I have been receiving numerous representations from planters regarding the way the FORIP was implemented. I have requested the MCIA since last year to compile facts and figures regarding all projects undertaken on small planters' sugar cane fields under the FORIP to ascertain whether funds have been well spent. If the

need is felt, I shall request the MCIA to appoint an independent firm to carry out a complete and comprehensive assessment to determine if the project has been implemented in a cost-efficient manner and if the desired results have been achieved.

I would like to inform the House that I had a meeting with the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Development, Mr Phil Hogan, in Brussels in May last year in the margin of the Joint Meeting of the ACP/EU. I made a plea to him for an in-house study to be carried out in ACP Sugar Producing Countries to assess the social and economic impact of the abolition of the internal quota of sugar on the EU Market to be effective as from 2017. I am pleased to inform the House that the request has been accepted and a consultant was in Mauritius last month to conduct the study. We expect that positive recommendations will come out of this exercise for the betterment of all stakeholders in the sugar cane industry.

Mr Sesungkur: Can I know from the hon. Minister the vehicle which was set up for the actual disbursement of the fund which was received from EU, under whose responsibility was that vehicle? Was it under the responsibility of his Ministry or the private sector?

Mr Seeruttun: All the funds received from the EU were transferred to the General Budget Support Fund, that is, the Government Fund. From there on, it was disbursed to the corporate sector, like I said, for the support of the VRS and ERS scheme. With regard to the FORIP scheme, provision was made in the Budget every year to cater for that expenditure and was transferred to the MCIA which was responsible to implement that scheme.

Mr Mahomed: As far as I know, every time the European Union delegation provides fund to the Government, especially as general Budget support. They come with clear targets and objectives. Following that, the European Union usually sends a consultant and this is a normal practice to see whether funds have been judiciously used. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of those past reports and what are his feelings about that?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, as far as I am aware, there are key performance indicators that are set, and once they are reached, funds are disbursed. I am sure there are experts who would come and assess whether those objectives are met. As far as I know, in this particular case, there were two indicators that were not met with regard to the ethanol framework which was supposed to be implemented. It was never implemented and with regard to the CT Power Project, we did not receive the whole amount earmarked for because these two indicators were not met, that is, the whole amount that was earmarked to be disbursed under that particular accompanying measure.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, *nous avons été témoins de la mort certaine des petits planteurs*. Over the years, we have witnessed the reduction in number and the problems that they have been encountering. I know they have written to the Prime Minister with the alliance of the small planters showing their dissatisfaction of the things which are happening and problems which can be solved. Can the hon. Minister inform the House and the small planters whether he is agreeable to meet them – or if he has met them – at least, prepare *un schéma de travail* so that they can be given some light for the coming years, the way they are being deprived of their rights and their problems? So, can the hon. Minister, at least, inform the House?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must inform the House that I have already met the alliance of small planters on two occasions. I intend to meet them again, in the near future, because I am coming with some amendments to the SIE Act. I am going to apprise them of those amendments shortly.

Madam Speaker: One last question hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mention has been made – I do not know whether it is by the Minister himself – of an Action Plan in one of these press conferences. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is such an Action Plan, if yes, can we have copies of this Action Plan, at least, to be briefed?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must inform the House that we had a report by a consultant, Landell Mills, and following that, I apprised Cabinet of that report. A High Level Committee was set up to look into the implementation of the recommendations of that report. Following the recommendations of that Committee, we have already started to implement the recommendations.

BRITAM KENYA & APOLLO HOSPITAL - SALE

(No. B/168) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to Britam Kenya, the Apollo Hospital and to the other assets of BAI Co. (Mtius), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to where matters stand as to the proposed sale thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) that in relation to Britam Kenya and Apollo Bramwell, the transactions are subject to a Non-Disclosure

Agreement between the concerned parties and no further information can be provided prior to the finalisation of these transactions.

With regard to the other assets of BAI Co. (Mtius) Ltd., these comprise mainly immovable properties for which the disposal process is underway.

Mr Uteem: I know the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is not the substantive Minister. Two weeks ago, Tuesday 29 March, the substantive Minister, answering to a PQ, stated in respect to Britam Kenya -

“They came to Mauritius and they said to us that they are willing to buy those shares themselves, this has been done. The MoU has been signed. The money is going to hit the bank account this week (...).”

So, at least, on that part, can I know from hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the shareholders who were supposed to buy Britam Kenya have put the money in the bank account and how much money have they put in the bank account or is that also confidential?

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of it. As the matter is being subject of a non-disclosure agreement, I shall transmit the matter to the substantive Minister and ask him to come with a statement to the House.

Mr Uteem: In the same PQ, the hon. substantive Minister stated that, in regard to BA Exchange, and I quote –

“(...) we are waiting for a green light from the Central Bank for the money to be credited tomorrow”.

Tomorrow, meaning on 30 March 2016.

Can I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has any information as regards BA Exchange, whether the Central Bank has given its clearance and money has hit the account as was told to us by the hon. Minister Bhadain?

Mr Soodhun: I am going to stick to what I have said. Concerning the BA Exchange, the approval of the Bank of Mauritius is being awaited to effect the transfer sale since there will be a change of the shareholder and BA Exchange is a licence of the Central Bank.

SME DEVELOPMENT SCHEME CERTIFICATE - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/169) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the Small

and Medium Enterprise Development Scheme Certificate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, information as to the number of applications received therefor since January 2015 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof issued as at to date, and
- (b) quantum of the financing provided to the holders thereof as at to date.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr Seeruttun): Madam Speaker, with your permission I am going to answer this question. I am informed that Mybiz, the one-stop shop for Small and Medium Enterprise, which manages and administers SME Development Scheme, has received as at date a number of 63 applications since its introduction on 12 February this year.

With regard to part (a) of the question, 20 applications have been approved. In the first instance, a letter of intent for an SME Development Scheme Certificate in respect of the approved project has been issued to each applicant. Once the applicant has given proof that the required financing has been secured, an SME Development Scheme Certificate will be issued.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that some Rs74 m. have already been earmarked for the financing of those 20 projects through loans with maturity up to 10 years and a moratorium of up to two years on principal repayment.

Mr Uteem: If I heard correctly the hon. Minister, only Rs74 m. have been committed whereas this Government had committed Rs2 billion to help Small and Medium Enterprises. May I know from the hon. Minister if he has information as to why has SMEDA, has the SME sector been so badly hit and why the target has been completely missed by this Government?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, with regard to the Rs74 m., I have just mentioned that it is with regard to the 20 projects that have been approved by the Mybiz, and that is the cost that is going to be involved for implementing those 20 projects. As and when the project proposals will come along, funds will be made available once they qualify as per the conditions laid out under that particular scheme.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Minister say that a sum of Rs74 m. has been earmarked for these SMEs' projects. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether a single cent has been disbursed to date?

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: As I said, Madam Speaker, as at to date, there were 63 applications, of which 20 have received a letter of intent. Once they receive that letter of intent, they have to go to the MauBank, where they have to secure the funding as per the conditions laid out. Once the conditions are fulfilled, the bank is going to ...

(Interruptions)

It is a question of following the process put in place. I believe, Madam Speaker, that once the projects are approved, funds will be made available. Like I said, it is only on 12 February, this year, that this process of application has been put in place. So far, 20 have already been processed and a letter of intent sent to them. They have six months, as per the conditions laid out, to come up with a letter securing the fund for them to have a certificate and they can proceed with their project.

Mr Ganoo: In the last Budget presented by the previous Minister of Finance, there were 25 paragraphs regarding the SME sector. In fact, the main problem why not a single cent has been disbursed so far is that because the booster loan which used to be provided for by the DBM no more exists with the MauBank, in the sense that loans are only granted with the usual restrictions granted by a normal commercial bank, that is, these SMEs have to provide the securities, and this is why, in fact, no loan has been disbursed so far, in spite of the announcement made by the previous Minister in his Budget Speech.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I must say that, at this stage, I am not in a position to reply to that question, being not the substantive Minister. But I am sure that if we give the chance for that scheme to work, probably we will see the results in a few months' time.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem, last question!

Mr Uteem: I fully understand my friend; he is not the substantive Minister. It is unfortunate that there are so many substantive Ministers not present today. Would the hon. Minister talk to his colleague and ask him to inquire whether the real reason why there has not been so many approved projects is that the guidelines for SME Development Scheme Certificate is so restrictive that there is only a very insignificant amount of entrepreneurs who are able to fulfil these criteria, and this is why, even out of the 70 projects, only 20 have been approved? Can he, with the view of boosting the SME sector, review the eligibility criteria, so that more SMEs are eligible for the grants?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I'll definitely pass on that message to my colleague responsible for that Ministry, but from the information that I have here, there is a list of different sectors that are concerned with that particular scheme. So, it is not very restrictive, I must say.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

CEB - GAS TURBINES

(No. B/170) 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 Prequalification Exercise for the Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 2 Gas Turbines Each Rated 35-40 MW (Site Conditions) at Fort George, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if it has obtained the Environment Impact Assessment Licence applied therefor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the CEB...

(Interruptions)

No, this is friendly fire!

I am informed by the CEB that it is in the process of recruiting a consultant shortly. One of the tasks of the consultant will be to carry out Environment Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment studies. The EIA license for the moment is not granted.

Mr Jahangeer: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, by specifying 35 to 40 MW in the tender, aware that, below 35, only Japanese, Korean, Indian and Chinese companies can participate? Above 40, the same companies can. But between 35 and 40, only two companies, namely Siemens and GE-Alstom can, and high level officials of both companies have visited CEB before the issuance of the tender.

Mr Collendavelloo: Some ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Collendavelloo: Some of the companies are qualified and others are not qualified. I don't know about these technical matters. We are dealing with two matters. First of all, the EIA...

(Interruptions)

Please! First of all, the EIA is for the consultancy. This is the question I am asked. With regard to the pre-qualification, the Central Procurement Board has launched an invitation for pre-qualification. It is anticipating too much to say that only two or four or five can be selected. This is the same sort of question that comes every time from this hon. Member and every time he is being proved wrong.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comment, please!

Mr Jahangeer: One of the mandatory conditions in the tender for pre-qualification is, and I quote –

“The bidder should have experience in similar tropical island ...”

And only one has this! It's GE-Alstom, which has constructed Nicolay Power Station.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, you are not replying? No reply!

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, is this a question?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: This is no joking matter! For years, there has been a mafia. Not all the staff of the CEB is concerned, but there are some tailor-made specifications. For years, that has been going on. It is no joke and it is no use saying that it is the Central Procurement Board, because it is people in the CEB; not all of them! But there is a mafia, for years, that has been preparing specifications with specific producers in mind, and not just in that case, in a lot of cases! And then, of course, when it is passed on to the Central Procurement Board, they don't do the technical work, and what has to happen, happens. It is a very serious matter. Can I ask the hon. Minister concerned whether he will look into that in that case? He has other advisers apparently from Reunion Island, from rice fields, God knows from where! Can I ask him whether he will countercheck if this is not a case where the specifications have been tailor-made with one or two producers in mind?

Mr Collendavelloo: Madam Speaker, the last time I heard that sort of *wachi wala* was when we were talking of Burmeister. We heard of specifications being tailored. So, what I did was very simple. I referred the matter not only to advisers, but also asked the African

Development Bank to tell us whether that *wachi wala* was right. I was told clearly that this was just ‘why, why, why’, without any substance, and the African Development Bank agreed with the specifications given by CEB. What can I do? I can’t do much! If there is something wrong in the specifications, people will complain, and there are channels for this. It is easy! They tried to go to the Supreme Court. They got an injunction, and then they withdrew their case. There is one company - the hon. Member knows that company very well – IMM. IMM were to challenge on the same grounds, and when they came before the IRP, they withdrew their challenge, but made us waste a lot of time. These people have got only one aim in mind: to block the progress. What is the basic of all? It’s that they started by shouting ‘black out is coming, black out is coming!’ And now, they want to delay the works in order ...

(Interruptions)

... to try and create black out!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Collendavelloo: They have been proved to be wrong, wrong, wrong, and I have been proved to be right, right, right!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, it is not if someone says right, right, right three times that it means it is right. I mean, that’s the last time I checked. One thing which the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has made reference to is about *wachi wala* and ‘why, why.’ I did not really understand what he meant by that, but then again ...

(Interruptions)

The Vice-Prime Minister also talked about the African Development Bank. Now, is he ready to table any document from the African Development Bank that comes and says exactly what he has said in this august Assembly, that they are saying that all questions put and all issues raised in this august Assembly about specifications, as raised by the hon. Bashir Jahangeer, is totally wrong and the Vice-Prime Minister is ‘right, right, right’? Does he have, at least, the courage to come and table that document?

Mr Collendavelloo: The hon. Member should have listened when I answered the PNQ, and I tabled - you listen! - the email before the Assembly but, of course, all you know is 'Yap! Yap! Yap!'

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please! Listen to the reply! You have asked your question, allow the Vice-Prime Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, you had a question?

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Leader of the Opposition was talking of mafia. May I refresh the memory of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister about what happened. There was a Select Committee concerning the gas turbine at Nicolay and one Minister had to resign. It is the same mafia operating at the CEB now and the same person at the Head of the CEB!

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, it is probably true, it is probably not true. But, each time that they have tried to test this before a court of law or before a tribunal, they have been proved wrong. They themselves withdrew their challenge. What can I do? Try again! Try again, try and prove that there is the mafia! This is not my understanding of the situation. Carry on, but don't block the projects, like they have been doing all this time. The purpose is only to stop development of electricity production in Mauritius. This is their only...

(Interruptions)

...their only...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't make comments, please! Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem, yes!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister being a Senior Counsel knows very well that people can't challenge once the specifications have been laid out. So, our question is very simple: who drafted the specifications? Is it someone from the CEB or is it an outside

consultant with international experience who has decided that this is the best model for Mauritius? This is what we are asking; if it is someone from the CEB internally who drafted it or an international consultant.

Mr Collendavelloo: At last, one intelligent question.

(Interruptions)

No! Hon. Uteem is also ‘*malin*’. Hon. Uteem ‘*aussi malin*’.

(Interruptions)

Bé to croire moi mo trop peur toi! To croire moi mo trop peur toi!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Don't lose the time of the House! Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, please reply!

Mr Collendavelloo: It is an intelligent question. I don't have the answer right now. I will check and come back to the House with the proper answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

CEB - RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES - BIDDERS

(No. B/171) 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 Request for Expression of Interest for the Installation of Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) for Power Generation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, the list of the successful bidders therefor, indicating the respective bid Kwh price.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the CEB has launched an

Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Installation of Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) for power generation on 01 June 2015 and at the closing date, it received 339 applications.

Subsequently, on 15 October 2015, it invited Request for Proposal exercise through open advertised bidding for 10-15 MW solar PV projects with the aim of accommodating 40-45 MW.

At the closing date on 22 December 2015, it received 11 proposals out of which three have been identified as preferred bidders, namely –

Name of Bidder	Location of PV Farm	Equivalent Tariff in MUR/kWh (*)
Voltas Eco-Biotech Ltd	Solitude	3.95
Voltas Eco-Biotech Ltd	Queen Victoria Fuel	3.77
Akuo Energy (Mauritius) Ltd	Henrietta	4.64

I would also wish to inform the House that the CEB has launched another RFP for solar PV farm of capacity 1-9 MW. The closing date is 13 May 2016.

Aerowatt, an aggrieved bidder, has filed a challenge at the Independent Review Panel on 26 February 2016 and an application for injunction in the Supreme Court on 29 March 2016.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister disclose the ownership of the land proposed to be used by Voltas?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, this requires a substantive question.

Mr Jahangeer: Madam Speaker, it is a mandatory condition in the tender that the proof of ownership should be disclosed.

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, of course, but a substantive question is required.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/187 and B/191 have been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

STC - OIL & PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - TRANSPORTATION

(No. B/172) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the transportation of oil and petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if an order has already been placed for the tankers therefor and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) name of the supplier thereof, and
- (b) respective purchase price thereof.

(Withdrawn)

HIGHWAYS - LIGHTING

(No. B/173) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the highways, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if remedial measures will be taken for the provision of appropriate and effective lighting systems thereat to ensure the safety of the users thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, since the highway crosses a number of local authorities, I shall, with your permission, arrange to place in the Library of the National Assembly, the information which each local authority concerned, has provided in respect of the street lighting network which is found on the stretch of the highway within their jurisdiction area.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister come up with a framework to solve this long-standing safety issue for road payers?

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I know it is a major problem. Since we came in about one year ago, we have been trying to make do with the system that was in place. The problem with the highway lighting is that it is installed by the RDA, maintained by the local authorities, and we have eight local authorities trying to maintain the system. That is why we are in such a mess.

About a month ago, we had a meeting, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport

and myself, and we have decided that we are going to have one authority only, not ten authorities, only one authority to build and maintain the system. We are working on it. We had a meeting about a month ago and we are working on it to come out so that we have only one authority to maintain the system.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Poor lighting is a cause of major accidents on the highway. So, may I have from the hon. Minister, at least, a timeline as to when this authority would be set up and, in the meantime, if people can speed up, RDA can go and replace the lighting because there are a number of black spots now, in the motorway especially, as a result of failure of lighting?

Dr. Husnoo: I take the point of the hon. Member. That is why we have set up this Committee and, believe me, we are working on it. We have started the work about a month ago and we are working on it now.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

OBSERVATOIRE DES DROGUES - SETTING-UP

(No. B/174) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the *Observatoire des Drogues*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom –

- (a) information as to the -
 - (i) date of the setting-up thereof;
 - (ii) name of the Chairperson and of the Board Members thereof;
 - (iii) number of meetings held by the Board thereof as at to date, and
- (b) and table copy of any report produced as at to date.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, the National Drug Observatory (*Observatoire des Drogues*) was set up on 11 September 2015 and its main objective is to provide up-to-date, factual, objective and reliable information concerning drug addiction in the country and its consequences.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (ii) of the question, I would like to inform the House that the National Drug Observatory is a coordinating body and the Chairperson is the Director-General Health Services of my Ministry, Dr. Pauvaday. A representative of the

Prime Minister's Office, representatives of my Ministry, a representative of the Police and the Mauritius Revenue Authority as well as representatives of NGOs form part of the Committee.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (iii) of the question, I chaired a first meeting and, subsequently, there have been two meetings chaired by the Director-General Health Services. A Sub-Committee and a working group have been set up under this coordinating body. The Sub-Committee has met on 29 November 2015 and 16 February 2016 while the working group has been meeting on a twice-weekly basis as from mid-February 2016.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the stakeholders have been requested to submit information relating to the drug situation in Mauritius by the end of January 2016 for the drafting of a first report. Working sessions for the compilation of data and writing up have been held frequently as from February 2016.

A first draft has been prepared and presented to the Committee members at the last meeting. It is the international norm for National Drug Observatories to submit yearly and *ad hoc* reports as required. The yearly report of the National Drug Observatory is expected to be finalised by July 2016 and will be circulated to all stakeholders and will be made public.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir si le *Chairman* de l'Observatoire des Drogues a été déposer devant la commission d'enquête sur la drogue ou bien si ce n'est pas fait, est-ce qu'il va le faire à l'avenir?

Mr Gayan: Well, I am not aware whether he went personally, but I will certainly be deponing before the Commission of Inquiry and I am expecting an invitation from the Commission.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As far as *l'Observatoire des Drogues* is concerned, I would like to know whether among the technical staff there is a specialist in addictology and, if yes, who is he?

Mr Gayan: Well, I understand that there is a specialist in addictology in my Ministry. I think his name is Dr. Jhugroo and he forms part of that team. Of course, there is all the staff dealing with substance abuse and drug addiction which forms part of this *Observatoire*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: This proposal to set up an *Observatoire des Drogues* was an interesting proposal made by the NGO which the Ministry, in its wisdom, took over and agreed upon. But can I ask the hon. Minister - since the idea of setting up this *Observatoire* was to monitor the situation in the evolution of the fight against substance abuse - whether this *Observatoire* will regularly come up with a report which will be made public and distributed to the NGOs as well?

Mr Gayan: Well, the NGOs form part of this *Observatoire*, but I must say, Madam Speaker, that when the NGOs went to the Commission of Inquiry on drugs chaired by former Justice Lam Shang Leen, they did not come up with any substantive information. In fact, the Chairperson of that Commission lashed out saying that he is going to close down the Commission of Inquiry unless he gets people who come to denounce the drug traffickers, etc. I think this is a major problem. I hope that the NGOs will collaborate so that we come to grips with this drug situation in the country. But there will be reports; an annual report plus *ad hoc* reports as when necessary.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker, again. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he does not feel that *l'Observatoire des Drogues* is not doing the same redundant job as the Harm Reduction Unit of his own Ministry?

Mr Gayan: Well, the Harm Reduction Unit is something else. In fact, we will be addressing this issue when we are dealing with the Bill on NATReSA later on. But I must say that *l'Observatoire des Drogues* is something which is current in major European countries and the aim is to collect information and data so that the authorities know where the problem lies. Unless there is this information that moves from down to up, it is not going to be possible for anybody to succeed in combating the scourge of drugs. So, the Harm Reduction Unit will be restructured and I will be dealing with that when we come to the Second Reading of the Bill.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Has the *Observatoire* made any report specifically recently on *drogues de synthèse*?

Mr Gayan: A draft report is in preparation and I hope that it will be finalised, and once it is finalised, it will be circulated.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, next question!

**MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS - CITADELLE MALL BUILDING –
RELOCATION**

(No. B/175) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the relocation of the offices of his Ministry at the Citadel Mall Building, in Port Louis, he will –

- (a) state the -
 - (i) reasons therefor, and
 - (ii) monthly rental payable therefor, and
- (b) table copy of the Lease Agreement in respect thereof.

Mr Sawmyaden: Madam Speaker, when I took office as Minister, I noted that my Ministry had been looking for additional floor space since 2012 to house its Finance and Human Resource Division in view of the congested office space at the 3rd floor of Emmanuel Anquetil Building where the Ministry was accommodated. The services of the Ministry have been expanding over the years and the number of staff has also been increasing.

It is worth pointing out that already at that time the services of the Ministry were spread out at several buildings, namely in Rose Hill, Beau Bassin and Port Louis and this was causing serious inconveniences to its customers and members of the staff as they had to move from one building to another. Many inconveniences were also encountered regarding movement of files.

Further, in July 2014, my Ministry was requested by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to consider the possibility of migrating to another building and, in the meantime, to hold on all the investment projects.

With a view to improving accessibility, efficiency, effectiveness and control of its services, a decision was taken to relocate all the offices of the Ministry under one roof. Consequently, all the services of the Ministry are now accommodated on the 7th and 8th floors of the Citadelle Mall in Port Louis.

As regards part (ii) of the question, the monthly rental payable for the 7th and 8th floors is Rs1,309,804 for a total area of 24,760 square feet. A monthly fee of Rs35,000 is also payable in respect of 10 parking slots at the building.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the lease agreement has already been drawn up and is at the Attorney General's Office.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Peut-on savoir qui sont les propriétaires des nouveaux bureaux du Citadelle Mall?

Mr Sawmynaden: The owner is Orland Ltd.

Mr Quirin: Peut-on savoir qui en sont les directeurs?

Mr Sawmynaden: I don't have this information with me, Madam Speaker.

Mr Quirin: Peut-on savoir, Madame la présidente, s'il y a eu un appel d'offres avant que tout le personnel du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports bouge vers le Citadelle Mall?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, bids for the renting space with amenities in the region of Port Louis to house the services of the Ministry were invited through open advertised bidding on 08 April 2015. The closing date for submission of proposals was 13 May 2015. At the closing date, two offers were received from Mascareignes Sterling Co. Ltd and Orland Ltd.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Minister the total cost of moving his offices to the new office?

Mr Sawmynaden: I don't have this information with me, but I know that it was done in-house.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Moving on the same line, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been any refurbishment, purchase of furniture, especially for the two offices, that is, the hon. Minister's office and the Chief Executive's or the Permanent Secretary's Office? Can we know whether tenders were called and how much has been spent?

Mr Sawmynaden: I have no idea. All went through the Procurement Office and they were the ones who were in charge of that.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The 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.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (No. IV of 2016) was read a first time.

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

At 4.14 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.45 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT BILL

(No. II of 2016)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (No. II of 2016).

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baboo!

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr S. Baboo): Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I wish to congratulate my colleague, hon. Alain Wong Yen Cheong, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management, for the laudable initiative taken for the introduction of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill into the National Assembly.

This Government cares for the welfare of the population. We are committed to saving lives and changing minds. We want to be wise before any event, not wise after the event. Precaution is better than cure. Addressing a disaster is a tremendous challenge. The new Bill is geared to meet this challenge.

Madam Speaker, due to climate change, there is a steady increase in the number of disasters. Furthermore, this is aggravated by a growing population, an increase number of people living in hazard, that is, prone areas and environmental degradation, unsustainable development patterns, rapid and unplanned urbanisation and climate change.

There is no doubt that climate change is altering the face of disaster risks, not so increase weather related variation, sea level, beach erosion, disruption to natural habitat, disappearance of islands and temperature rises, but also through societal vulnerabilities, excessive use of water, agriculture and the eco-system.

This Bill will be instrumental in skilling up our risk reduction efforts and to reinforce the resilience of local communities. It will decrease vulnerability and exposure to hazards whilst strengthening capacity for resilience.

Madam Speaker, a disaster is not only the concern of the Government; it is the concern of the whole population. Advocacy, awareness raising and education are essential in preparing the population to face unforeseen disasters. We have to empower the community to act when there is a natural calamity. The culture of solidarity in these situations is very strong in the population. This Bill shows them the way to join their efforts to safe keep their area, parents, friends and neighbours.

We want to prevent and reduce vulnerability in line with international norms and practices. Community preparedness will lead to reducing the vulnerability of individuals and households in disaster prone areas and will improve their ability to cope with the effects of disasters. We aim at preparing local response mechanism to handle disaster situation.

Madam Speaker, animals have the flair to detect disasters. It is a natural instinct. It is reported that, during the tsunami of 2004, animals had already sensed the impending danger and had already run away before the tsunami struck. We have to inculcate this alertness in the minds of our people. This Bill will help us to ensure that our people are fully aware of dangers and risks in time of a disaster. The contribution of artists and creators in a sensitisation campaign will be accentuated through video clips, posters, billboards, sketches

and multimedia. We have a culture of safety and protection in our society. Our cultural diversity is a source of unity. When there is a natural disaster, our unity is seen at its *apogée*.

Madam Speaker, our heritage is our pride. We are in a country with a relatively short history, that is, some 200 years of history compared to the great civilisations. However, they have lost some of their major heritage and values during natural calamities and disasters. This Bill will help us protect our heritage sites from calamities thus, preserving them for the posterity.

Madam Speaker, this reminds me of the recent floods in Tamil Nadu. Mosques opened their doors to accommodate the victims and Kovils opened their doors to enable Muslims to offer prayers. This is a glaring example of solidarity when there is a disaster. The team spirit of the population and the synergy with the authorities will definitely boost the morale of the population in difficult time.

There is no need for panic. We will keep our heads on our shoulders if we are fully prepared. Recovery aims to restore and improve people's lives to pre-disaster conditions making them less at risk to future disasters and climate change impact. The Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Centre will be empowered to bring back the required serenity in the area, life returning to normal but with more resilience to future disasters and climate change impact.

Madam Speaker, nature is considered as the teacher, the nurse and the healer by poets, but nature has also negative impacts on human life. Droughts, tsunamis, floods and famines are some examples. This Bill is attempting to reconcile nature with man. We can prevent disasters if we respect nature and plan properly our dwellings. Mother Nature is not harmful.

To conclude, I quote the saying of Charles Darwin –

“It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change.”

This Bill is, therefore, fully responsive to climate change.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo!

(4.55 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill was long-awaited due to the previous serious risk of disaster faced by the natural environment of Mauritius. It is interesting to note that this Bill is far-reaching in the sense that it also covers the economic environment too.

For instance, who can forget the flash flood of 26 March 2008 and 30 March 2013 respectively which shook the population and awakened all of us? It is good to note that following the flash flood of March 2008, a report was prepared by the then Justice Domah. Significant recommendations were made on this issue but, unfortunately, the previous Government had not given due consideration to those recommendations and appropriate measures have not been taken. Had appropriate measures been taken, we would have been in a better position and well-equipped to manage the disastrous flash flood in 2013 and lives would not have been lost.

Having said so, Madam Speaker, it was indeed high time that the Government of Mauritius comes up with a comprehensive Bill in order to provide for an institutional framework. This framework would -

- (i) cater for the strategic actions that need to be urgently addressed and adopted for the effective risk reduction and management of national disasters, and
- (ii) provide for the design of risk reduction and management of national disasters at operational levels across the country.

One laudable aspect of this Bill is that it lays the foundation towards the cultivation of yet another outlook of national risk reduction and management. With the implementation of the provisions of this Bill, it now seems that the Mauritian population would not be taken aback by national calamities. Such calamities usually leave the population to dwell in national mourning for days in the aftermath of such national tragedies.

Indeed, this Bill adopts an all-encompassing approach which provides –

- (i) for the prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters and disaster preparedness;
- (ii) when a disaster cannot be prevented and it does occur, the Bill provides for an effective response to that disaster and also for the mitigation of its adverse impact, and

- (iii) it provides for the management of the post-disaster activities which would involve recovery and rehabilitation.

This is where my Ministry can coordinate and collaborate with the institution that would be set up for the provision of effective assistance to victims of floods, cyclones and also other natural calamities.

I earnestly believe that this Bill is paving the way towards the development of innovative disaster management system in Mauritius. This would, undoubtedly, build resilience to disasters including natural calamities, as I have just said, such as floods, cyclones, tsunamis and so on. It clearly shows that we are making the security and safety of our citizens a key policy priority. In the National Progress Report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2013-2015 the three future outlook areas mentioned have been fully considered by the provision of this present Bill.

The first future outlook area considers the integration of disaster risk consideration into sustainable development policies, planning and programmes at all levels. This Bill lays a lot of importance on this aspect. The second future outlook area refers to the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels. This aspect has also been incorporated in the Bill to ensure resilience to hazards. The third future outlook area covers the systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness response and also recovery programmes. Again, this has been catered for in the present Bill.

Various institutions such as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee and the National Crisis Committee will be set up.

They will be armed with extensive powers and they would be dedicated towards the implementation of their respective statutory duties. Therefore, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management would be on the daily agenda of all authorities concerned.

Public awareness of the dangers of national disasters and actions in response to such risk would become rife; this is actually one of the foremost objectives of the National Council. The involvement of the local authorities via the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee is praiseworthy. We cannot deny that we are often faced with flood-related problems in the local communities. The creation of the Local Committee in the

strategic implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management will ensure close collaboration with the national institution. This will ensure rapid and also effective intervention in risky and emergency situation.

The Bill also provides for the setting up of related institution in Rodrigues, Agalega and Cargados Carajos islands given that they are equally prone to the risk of disasters as Mauritius. This forward-looking Bill provides for local, national and regional linkage in the development of strategies to grapple with risk of disasters and their aftermath. We are not the first country to realise the pressing need of those institutions provided for under this present Bill. In the past, countries such as South Africa, the Philippines or Colombia have similarly developed one legal framework for disaster risk reduction. These have facilitated the adoption of a holistic approach to the prevention and also reduction of the risk of disasters. In South Africa, the 2002 Disaster Management Act similarly designed a disaster management structure, disaster management frameworks for all levels of Governments with clear rules and mandates established. Likewise, Colombia has adopted framework legislation, which organises disaster risk management at all levels of the Government.

What I can see is that we are indeed aligning ourselves on the international front. It would not be long when our national policy would meet major international policies framework. Disasters are having other growing social and economic impacts paralysing so many countries across the globe. It is good that we are coming with this present Bill. The way this Bill provides for the creation of different institutions at different levels and the way that it caters for the coordination of these institutions on the local, international and regional levels are indeed exemplary.

Moreover, the way this Bill establishes an accountability framework on the national and also on the international front is highly commendable. Indeed, our paradise destination would continue to attract even more tourists when they would be reassured of the resilience of Mauritius towards national disasters especially when we are talking about natural calamities.

To sum up, I cannot, but command and thank the hon. Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management for bringing forward this present Bill for the better protection and improvement of the safety and also security of our Mauritian population.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(5.05 p.m.)

Mr S. Ramkaun (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Madam Speaker, I would like, first of all, to congratulate this Government and, more particularly, the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management for coming up with this Bill.

It was high time to come along with such a document which will pave the way for a better living environment for the people of Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands and for all those who visit the island. Although, being a small island State, Mauritius is not deprived of intelligent people who can help to ensure a prompt coordination, monitoring of actions before and after possible risk of disasters. Here, we are talking of disasters, be it cyclones, heavy and torrential rains, tsunamis, heavy waves, water crisis, earthquakes, landslides and even terrorist attack, etc.

Madam Speaker, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan covers four thematic areas, namely –

- (i) disaster prevention and mitigation;
- (ii) disaster preparedness;
- (iii) disaster response, and
- (iv) disaster rehabilitation

Madam Speaker: Sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but I can hear a phone ringing in the Chamber.

Mr Ramkaun: ...disaster rehabilitation and recovery which corresponds to the structure of the National risk Reduction and Management Council.

The Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management in liaison with the police formulates and implements the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan and ensures that this physical framework, social economic and environmental plans of communities, cities, municipalities and district councils are consistent with such plan.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan is consistent with the National disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework which serves as principal guide to disaster risk reduction and management efforts to the country. The framework

envisions a country of “safer, adaptive and disaster resilient communities towards sustainable development.” It conveys a paradigm shift from reactive to proactive disaster risk management wherein men and women have increased their awareness and understanding of disaster risk reduction management with the end, in view of increasing people’s resilience and decreasing their vulnerabilities.

Madam Speaker, all of us have not forgotten the recent flash flood of 30 March 2013 in Mauritius which has claimed, at least, 11 lives. About 152 millimetres of rainfall had been recorded in Port Louis within three hours. I still cannot believe what has happened to our little beloved island. I do feel that the bereaved families and for people whose property has been destroyed in the catastrophic floods. The inquest will then begin.

Madam Speaker, regarding the reasons why the area was overwhelmed leading to so many deaths, such events are supposed to happen only once in a lifetime, but we had two similar events in a few weeks. Who is to be blamed for the inefficient evacuation of flood waters?

Talking about natural disasters around the world, we had 150 national disasters affecting millions of people worldwide in 2015. Asia again, bore the brunt of these disasters reported globally. Floods continued to be the most frequent occurring natural disasters and also affect the most people worldwide. The following are the six worst disasters for the year 2015 –

massive earthquake devastated Nepal;

- a magnitude of 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal on April 25, 2015, killing more than 8,800 people;
- it damaged or destroyed nearly 900,000 buildings and created avalanche in the Himalayas, and left almost 1 million children out of school;
- major aftershock including a magnitude of 7.3 tremor three weeks later, slowed recovery efforts and added to the devastation.

This was the deadliest disaster on record for the nation of 26 million people. Flood of a century shocked Chennai, India. Weeks of torrential rains in November caused the worst flooding in Southern India city of Chennai had seen in 100 years. The residents in the capital city of Tamil Nadu State were seen carrying belongings above their heads, working through the streets chest deep in floodwaters, walking through the streets while entire riverside settlements were washed away.

At least 379 people have died, including 54 in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh State where the floods also destroyed about 100,000 acres of crops worth \$150 m. Heat waves hit southern India and the other one is Typhoon Komen, monsoon rains that inundated Myanmar, Bangladesh, India.

Typhoon Komen blazed through the Bay of Bengal over the summer, killing hundreds of people in Myanmar, Bangladesh and India, and lashing the region with monsoon rains. The ensuing widespread floods and landslides affected millions after destroying homes, crops, and roads. In hard-hit Myanmar, where 12 of 14 states were affected, 117 people died and nearly 400,000 people were displaced. Again, Malawi, Mozambique, massive floods were there. Drought worsens food security in Ethiopia.

Thus, we see that disaster preparedness is of paramount importance. While governments and humanitarian agencies rushed to meet the immediate needs of children and families affected by disasters, NGOs also work year round to help communities reduce risk and help themselves when disaster strikes. Lawren Sinnema, an Emergency Affairs Programme Management Officer, quotes the following –

“Working with communities for preparedness is key,” (...). “Because while you can't entirely reduce risk from disasters, you can alleviate their effects if you are prepared.”

We are doomed to be our own destroyers if we do not consider seriously the *aléas* of nature. We are so minuscule that we are constantly under the threat of being swept off by a simple moment of carelessness. Even the 2014 report of the United Nations inter-governmental panel on climate change predicted that the world sea level would rise between 30 and 90 centimetres by year 2100. For Seychelles, that would mean a loss of up to 70% of the country's land mass. This rise in sea level would, of course, affect our island Mauritius, Rodrigues and more particularly our Outer Islands, which are merely a few metres above sea level. A historic agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon resilient and sustainable future was agreed by 195 nations in Paris on 12 December 2015.

Madam Speaker, prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters and disaster preparedness are the key words, and this Government will address this problem, so that such tragedies do not happen again. This is where the Bill has its importance. I totally agree with the hon. Minister when he says that a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council need to be set up to a culture of safety and resilience to disasters amongst other

mission statements of the Council. Accordingly, the National Council shall have the support of all the Ministries, authorities and other competent bodies such as the Meteorological Station and the Police Force, which will give the due dimension to the Council.

Madam Speaker, with the setting up of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, we can already foresee that no stone will be left unturned as far as coordination and monitoring the implementation of a disaster risk reduction and management activities, as it will be decided by the National Strategic Framework and National Plan. Besides coordinating and monitoring, it is good to see that the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders will be taken on board.

Thus, they will be part of an integral objective of environmental related policies and plans, sound land use planning, natural resource managements, amongst others, along with a well-planned national infrastructure, through the enforcement of building codes. Accordingly, the national centre is being called to develop a National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan, to be reviewed and updated as and when necessary, and will provide necessary measures for the prevention of disasters and to reduce their impact. *Il va sans dire que* all Ministries will have to do their task in order to fulfil their responsibilities to the best of their capacities.

Madam Speaker, our so tiny island will not be able to accept another 30 March 2013. After three years, Madam Speaker, *les cicatrices de ce 30 mars 2013* are still present and fresh in our minds. This Bill will bring some *soulagement* and will show that this Government's interest is in a better daily of the citizens of Mauritius whereas other people's mind was focussed elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, it is good to note that the Bill provides a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee for every local authority. This will bring concern of one and all to follow and to safeguard the physical aspect of the environment where the local people have to live. With the setting up of the Local Emergency Operations Command, a quick response to tackle any disaster is assured, thus preventing the chaotic situation to reach disproportionate dimensions.

However, Madam Speaker, it needs to be said that sometimes a disaster does not come by itself. Maybe, Madam Speaker, at times, we are all guilty of any disaster, be it small or big. We have witnessed in the past, *sans le vouloir et peut-être sans le savoir*, how plastic bags, illegal construction around the island have contributed to unexpected flooding.

Madam Speaker, I know it is not time to point out to anyone or to be wise after the event, but it should be said that if things were done properly, Mauritius could have been spared of these painful moments. This is why, Madam Speaker, this Bill will show to many that *L'alliance Lepep* Government is a caring one, not only in words, but in actions also. The participation of civil society organisations is crucial to ensuring effective reduction of risk and management of disasters.

Underpinning the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Framework, it is the principle of multi-sectorial responsibility. National disaster risk reduction management is a crosscutting issue and it encompasses the advancement of reforms in social, economic and political affairs. Disasters also affect the most vulnerable sectors of society. Therefore, these vulnerable groups, particularly the poor, women, children, elderly, and the differently abled must have a say in how their lives are shaped. It is important that the voices of the grassroots communities are represented and heard. Moreover, civil society organisations possess a wealth of knowledge in effective risk assessment and risk reduction approaches and have played many key formal and informal roles in community recovery and risk reduction.

Madam Speaker, it is time for action and, to act, we need the tools and manpower. Among tools, I wish to enumerate some measures, which I am sure the hon. Minister will give due consideration and will give a more human dimension to the Bill. I am of the opinion that many of our youngsters will be given the opportunity to prove themselves as good and well-trained patriots, so that they can tackle any environmental disaster in their locality.

It is high time, Madam Speaker, to give a new dimension to our youngsters, to give a real *forme à la vie de nos jeunes citoyens, décideurs de demain, car ce sera leur responsabilité de mener ce pays à bon port, car nous avons déjà fait le plus difficile en l'arrachant des griffes des prétentieux sans vision*. With adequate information and training, Mauritius will have the best squad for the local authorities and the national disciplined forces. Madam Speaker, *parallèlement*, with the best elements around, we should give them tools to enable to deliver.

Madam Speaker, I use to spend some time with my family at the seaside. I have always thought that *la mer nourrit son homme, mais il s'avère que quand elle est fâchée, la mer ne fait pas de cadeau*.

(Interruptions)

I still have in mind the deadly tsunamis which struck the countries ...

(Interruptions)

... of South East Asia, and we all know the chaos...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Ramkaun: ... that the tsunami creates.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, has always been *avant-gardiste*. This is why I am suggesting vigilance towers to be constructed on all our public beaches with a well-formed personnel to follow the movement of waves. As I said before, we are living a world of certainties. At least, Madam Speaker, we will be able to say that we have tried our utmost best to safeguard the lives of our dear ones because there is nothing we can do when we do not act promptly.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

(5.21 p.m.)

Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Bill, which I have to say is very important for the Republic of Mauritius. I wish to congratulate hon. Ramkaun for his well-elaborated exposé.

(Interruptions)

He has said it almost all. I will try my best not to replicate.

Mauritius is very prone to natural disasters. *Au-delà du changement climatique avéré, les activités humaines et les mutations des territoires peuvent fortement aggraver les conséquences négatives des aléas naturels. L'homme n'est plus seulement une victime à protéger, il est aussi devenu un générateur majeur de risque à informer, à éduquer et à contrôler.*

Madam Speaker, motherland of ours, Mauritius paid almost exactly three years ago, on 30 March 2013, an expensive price; lives were lost. When that happened, it must be said that the then Government was, to quote now a famous expression, 'active, reactive and proactive', and I have witnessed it as a civil servant based at that material time at the Prime Minister's Office. In the days following the incident, I was assigned by the then Secretary to

Cabinet and Head of Civil Service, Mr Suresh Seebaluck, to do two things, which I feel bound I should mention here today; firstly, to coordinate and support the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise mission. They were immediately approached by Government in the days following the flash flood to send a team to Mauritius to help in the review of the flood situation. This was the first and only time I had the chance to work with the Singapore team and I must say that they worked well. They were accompanied by a team of experts from the Public Utilities Board of Singapore and their partners to help in this review. The Singapore's delegations observations were captured as initial observations in a report that seeks to pave the way for future remedial action. The Singapore team observed the following, and I quote from the report -

“The disaster risk reduction strategic framework and action plan provides a strong analysis of risk with respect to flooding, coastal inundation and landslides. There remains a need to take a multi-hazard approach to assess all forms of risk in the country, including man-made to support appropriate preparation and mitigation strategies.”

Against this backdrop, a resident consultant in disaster risk management and humanitarian specialist, whom I was already requested to establish contact with, was recruited as Adviser to the then Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and her primary task was to set up and manage a Disaster Management Centre that will precisely take that multi-hazard integrated approach to assess and create structures to support disaster management of all forms of natural and human made risks for Mauritius, Rodrigues and Outer Islands. The Centre served and is still serving as a national platform on Disaster Risk Management.

As a matter of fact, the adviser started her work at the *Maurice Île Durable Commission*, the Department I was then heading at the Prime Minister's Office. So, even though the Disaster Management Centre subsequently moved out from my office, as it was getting bigger with each passing week, I keenly kept following the activities of same, and they were doing important things like reviewing of existing disaster management in Mauritius and analysis of requirement to reinforce this system and undertaking resource and risk mapping; but, more importantly, Madam Speaker, to review the existing legislative framework for disaster management and disaster risk reduction and to propose a sound legislative framework for disaster management in Mauritius in collaboration with key

stakeholders. The fruit of all that is before us today, in the form of this Bill which, I am glad to say, has positively evolved.

Madam Speaker, year 2013 also saw the finalisation of an Inundation, Flooding and Landslide National Risk Profile, Maps, Strategy Framework and Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management for the Republic of Mauritius. It was prepared by UNDP Consultants. It is a good Action Plan and the implementation of its recommendation involves billion of rupees and requires a participatory multiagency and multi-stakeholder engagement. I hope that the Government will ensure that the recommendations of the consultants be implemented within a timeframe of two planning cycles as recommended; the first one being from 2013 to 2018 and the second one from 2019 to 2025.

Madam Speaker, it is worth mentioning that it is based on these recommendations that a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC), termed as the National Centre in this Bill, was set up in 2013 to serve as a national platform on Disaster Risk Management. This centre is also responsible for coordinating the implementation of the recommendation of the Action Plan.

Madam Speaker, back then, the NDRRMC was tasked to develop model National Disaster Management Centre Organisational Structures for advancing Disaster Management in Mauritius, to recommend procedures for undertaking periodic assessment of the organisational structure and to determine reliability, effectiveness and efficiency. I am glad to see that from as early as paragraph 2 of this Bill that a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council will be set up and that it shall oversee the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework and National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan. The National Council shall also lay down national guidelines for disaster risk reduction and management at all levels. This is definitely a step forward.

Madam Speaker, education is the cornerstone to natural disaster and climate change education, so says *Maurice Île Durable* third education policy No. 3 which advocates the need to promote critical consciousness with regard to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation. In line with this and with a view to embrace a culture of risk, in September 2014, an international consultant was hired through the UNDP to prepare school safety plans and to ensure the integration of disaster risk reduction in Mauritius in primary and secondary school curriculums.

I do believe that this report provides good material for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and that the Ministry will look at it and put it to good use, and that the action that comes from it will follow.

All this is expensive work and has been done and should be put to good use in the spirit of continuity of Government, and I must say that I am pleased to see, once again, from paragraph 5 (a), which entails the promotion of a culture of safety and resilience to disasters through the use of knowledge, innovation and education, is catered for in this Bill.

Madam Speaker, I have to say that the people who have worked on the first draft of the Bill in 2013 have done extensive consultations, including with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) who are the international custodians of disaster law. I am aware that they reviewed the Bill - meaning the IFRC - positively and underlined how important it is for countries to have strong legislations in this area. They particularly praised the community-based aspect of the Bill. As a matter of fact, this has been retained as part 5 of this Bill, which provides that the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee at local authority level have, within their midst, as committee members, Mayors and Chairpersons of local authorities.

Madam Speaker, for sure, this Bill before us today is to a large extent very much the same as compared to when it was first drafted, but some changes have been necessary structurally owing to the move of the centre from the Prime Minister's Office to the Ministry of Environment. There has been an additional element included regarding the establishment of a Disaster Response Unit within the SMF which is good to see. This, undeniably reflects how understanding of Disaster Risk Management has grown since the centre was established in 2013, including the need to replicate the same model for Rodrigues as part of paragraphs 23 to 34 of this Bill. Since its setting up in 2013, officers of the Disaster Management Centre have been to Rodrigues for at least three times. So, the results are there. Similar considerations are also being given to Agalega and the Cargados Island.

On a more critical note, Madam Speaker, I wish to talk about the National Emergency Operations Command, sub-paragraph 17(4)(b) in the Bill, wherein it is provided that the Commissioner of Police or whomsoever he will delegate his powers to, may cause the evacuation, either voluntarily or using such force as may be necessary. It is to be understood that if any person refuses to vacate an area, a Police Officer may use such reasonable force as may be necessary to remove that person from that area. Now, here we have to be a little

cautious or else we could be skiing on thin ice given that the statement does not specify whether a person is being removed, to be removed, is at risk because he is disaster affected although it could be argued that the same is implied.

My concern here is that this element could be used to forcibly remove people from illegal settlements or squatted areas or may in any situation which is outside the limit of disaster management. Now, this is a personal view. I understand that Police are, anyway, permitted to use reasonable force in the enactment of their duties. But like the saying goes 'better be safe than sorry'. My suggestion is that this element requires a specific mention.

Madam Speaker, as I have previously stated, this is an important piece of legislation for Mauritius and, with its implementation, it is necessary to have some answers to the following questions -

- (i) What is the status of the national centre currently in terms of staffing, budget and operations?
- (ii) The Bill refers to National Strategic Framework, National Plan and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy. Now, what is the time frame for development of these documents and will there be budget provisions in the upcoming budget to implement these?
- (iii) Given the provisions to support evacuation of disaster affected areas, what are the existing policies governing entitlements for those evacuated in terms of alternative accommodation and/or compensation?
- (iv) There is no mention of use of management of funds and/or relief funds from either permanently available or donated by the public for relief for disaster-affected population. What legal instruments exist that oversee this area? International best practice would usually require that the use of relief funds conforms to clear guidelines and criteria to ensure transparency, clarity and equity. The Government could look up to the guidelines for use on Natural Disasters Relief Fund for the Seychelles which was set up there by the President in the aftermath of the heavy floods caused in the southern region of the island as a result of the torrential rains that struck Seychelles during period 27 January to 29 January 2013. I am tabling a copy of these guidelines for the information of the Government this evening.

Madam Speaker, with this Bill, the time is right for this Government to take to the next level, all the good initiatives undertaken by the previous Government and I have every

hope that they will strive forward for the sake of lower risk during even mosquito-borne diseases or deaths from road accidents, flash floods and cyclones. This helps to focus on the elements relevant to reduction of risk. There is not much we can do about the hazards of weather, but we can both reduce vulnerability and increase effective response so long as we can use an evidence-based approach to analysis of the costs and benefits. There is much we can do to reduce the hazards of mosquitoes, our vulnerability to them and our effective response to cases found. Once upon a time, there were 100,000 cases a year and today we have only 2,000 cases due to malaria in certain places of the world, but now it is zero. Now, this has been eliminated in a highly cost-effective way and I would like to, if I may introduce the concept of cost-effectiveness of measures in relation to relative risks and would humbly remind the House that deaths from road accidents are a high risk, high vulnerability and, until now, we are weak in effective response.

On this food for thought note, I shall end here and thank you for your attention.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo!

(5.41 p.m.)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr S. Lutchmeenaraidoo): Madam Speaker, Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please proceed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, please proceed with your speech!

(Interruptions)

No comments from those who are leaving! No comments, no remarks, I said! Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, please proceed with your speech.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes. Madam Speaker, this is a subject which I wanted to develop because I have been working on it for the past 12 years and it is linked to development in worldwide, in the sense that since now more than 15 years, development climate changes and changes in the environment have imposed on us a reflection on what can be the world trends and also trends in Mauritius which we have to plan. The idea was

gouverner c'est prévoir and that we had to know what are the risks further down the road so that we can plan for it.

We have seen, in fact, for the past 15 years, the huge degradation at the level of climate, at the level of the environment that has set up a situation where we have new events. The principle of disaster means - and even that is not predictable, that is unexpected - in fact, a black swan event.

Therefore, we have witnessed since 2000 a series of events. We have seen, for instance, at the level of contagious diseases, development of new diseases which are linked to deterioration in environment and climate changes. We have also seen in Mauritius the flash floods to which we are not used to. Therefore, the idea then was to go in a big way to set up a centre that will manage those disasters. In this context, managing disasters mean that we need an institution that is far larger than what we had at that time. In fact, the conditions for a project like this to materialise is that number one: we need speed of intervention, crash of an airplane to buses that knock out on the road.

In all those cases, because of the emergency element, because of the unpredictable element, we are compelled, in fact, to be able to act very fast. This is probably the main reason why we said: how can we move ahead to ensure that intervention is done within minutes? Which implies what? It implies at the level of logistics, of human resources and of finance, an approach which is non-traditional. I take one example: financial facilities. We can't expect the centre to operate if the Director has got to request for permission each time with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for approval of expenditure, then disaster will be well behind it. So, in this type of structure, it means that there is a decentralisation process in financial management whereby the institution can take decisions very quickly, instantly, because they need to decide if they have the financial resources to deal with those emergency cases.

This is why in the Budget we thought about setting up something quite substantial and I am happy that this Government is doing it in a beautiful way, in the sense that we say this centre *est appelé à devenir* one of the largest Disaster Management Centre in the region. We have sought help from le *plan recette* from France and Reunion Island. So, this first element of finance is very important.

The second element is logistics. We can't deal with emergency in a soft way. A centre like this needs equipment, facilities, logistics, which can be extremely costly. A centre like

this needs, for instance, helicopters that can move very quickly and needs equipment that must be available very quickly. I speak of, let us say, floods. Well, there is equipment which exists whereby you can stretch a sort of bridge and create a communication between two pieces of land of say 150 metres. This can be done. But the centre must be equipped for it. So, the Capital Budget for this project is huge because we have to ensure facilities, equipment that can be used, therefore, for that purpose, logistics and speed of decision.

And, third, now, are the human resources. Human resources, we said, we have SMF. We can probably put SMF to better use also. The idea is that human resources should also be a major component of it: finance, logistics and human resources, in which case, SMF would have been used more for integrating the centre itself. Those are, therefore, the conditions which we defined at that time.

As I say, time is telling us that it is better that we be prepared and not to react to disaster. This is what Government is doing. We are setting up a centre that is there and that will provide for emergency action in all situations, whether it be diseases, accidents, cyclones, tsunamis. I personally feel that we are moving in a period which is getting more and more unpredictable, with events also that are getting more and more unpredictable.

This is why I think that Government has taken the right decision, at the right time, to go ahead with this project and I, really, in the depth of my heart, wish good luck to Government to ensure implementation of this project because it will ensure safety for the country, safety for the nation, safety for citizens.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

(5.48 p.m.)

Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to say a few words on this Bill.

Let me, first of all, thank and congratulate everybody who has contributed in the drafting, the preparation of this Bill.

I am going to address, Madam Speaker, four issues. The first issue that I wanted to address is that of linking any disaster risk reduction and management initiative to the issue of climatic change adaptation. The world has been experiencing unprecedented climatic

changes. Disaster management along with climatic change adaptation has been at the forefront of world debates during several decades.

In a recent article in the journal of Institution of Engineers of Mauritius, Mr Jayesh Desai states and I quote –

“The impact of climate change is producing a number of apparently superfluous situations, unprecedented in many cases such as -

- increase in the annual mean temperature, predictions that by 2100 the global average surface warming will increase by 1.1 to 6.4 °C depending on the location;
- a declining trend in total annual rainfall, but an increase in the frequency of intense rainfall episodes;
- sea level rise, predicted to 18–59 cm by 2100;
- and a likely increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones with larger peaks of wind speeds and more heavy precipitation;
- oceans becoming more acidic.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you are disturbing the hon. Member.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, there is increasingly an emphasis to always link any decision and initiative on disaster risk reduction and management to the concept of climatic change adaptation. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill aims at preventing and mitigating the impacts of disasters, but also emphasises on better responsiveness, preparedness to disasters and the management of post-disaster activities.

My first observation, therefore, Madam Speaker, to the authorities responsible for the implementation of this Bill is to understand that any disaster management initiative cannot operate in a vacuum and that the issue of climatic change adaptation should be integrated gradually in this whole strategy of fight against natural calamities. It is in this respect that I believe that immediately after the adoption of the current Bill on disaster management, the Government should come forward with a programme to respond to climatic change in order to ensure a sustainable development in the long run, for example, an impact assessment of climatic change in the different sectors of the economy, enhancement of public awareness and participation, the fostering of international cooperation to obtain foreign support.

Madam Speaker, the findings of an important research paper on Linking Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change by the German Committee for Disaster Reduction mentioned, and I quote -

“Disaster risk reduction must no longer be seen as a post shock-oriented tool to restore communities affected by disasters to their pre-disaster condition. Instead, it must be acknowledged as a toolkit that can be used to take advantage of the opportunities that catastrophes provide for change and to create long-term resilience. Furthermore, it can provide sophisticated instruments to constantly monitor, evaluate and adjust adaptation strategies in the face of ongoing uncertainty and risk.

If adaptation measures fail, the humanitarian community is the first one to be confronted with the consequences. While the potential of linking Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation has already received growing acceptance within the scientific and also the humanitarian and development community, the integration of both fields of work has hardly been put into practice.”

I would, therefore, invite the authorities to seriously consider a strategy to integrate the initiatives related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation locally.

The second issue I wanted to address, Madam Speaker, is that of communication. I have noted that section 4 of the Act defines the composition of the National Council. The fact that ICT has become an extremely important tool to facilitate disaster risk reduction and management, I suggest that a representative of the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation equally forms part of the structure. I had a very bad experience myself personally during the last floods which occurred on 10 February this year, Madam Speaker.

Everybody in this House should understand that this is an issue which should rise above party politics. I personally witnessed water level rising inside a few houses up to the beams in my constituency at Fond du Sac and tried to contact the Disaster Management Unit for support, but could hardly reach an Officer-in-Charge who could provide support or understand the urgency of the matter. The situation was dramatic since 3 a.m. and at about 9.30 a.m. I was told that the Disaster Management Committee was about to meet at 10.00 a.m. and that I could call afterwards for assistance.

You could imagine what it means when you are the Member of Parliament of a region, walking in its main street with water level above your knees and struggling to have the assistance of the Fire Services, but constantly being told that all units of the Fire Services

around the island have been mobilised in Port Louis because that was the area mostly affected on that day. In fact, everybody took stock of the dramatic situation in Fond du Sac on that same afternoon. But, once again, I wish to emphasise that this is an issue that should rise above party politics.

It is, therefore, extremely important to understand that effective communication would enable -

- (i) the structures to have precise and reliable information;
- (ii) appropriate and effective allocation of resources;
- (iii) timely intervention, and
- (iv) generation of valuable information for preventive measures.

I, therefore, propose that there is an effective Communication Unit that not only collects timely and reliable information in moments of crisis but disseminates the same information in a well-structured way regularly to the different structures being put in place with a view to define priorities of intervention.

Madam Speaker, the third issue I wanted to address relates to funding. I have not seen any mention about funding of projects in the Bill. Natural calamities and disaster require the support of one and all. The private sector has always responded positively to the call of Government to give a helping hand in the development of our economy. They will certainly have a major contribution to the representative of Business Mauritius in the National Council.

However, I am sure that there are wide possibilities of attracting major sources of finance available from either the local private sector or international organisations to finance programmes on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. I, therefore, propose the creation of a National Disaster Risk Reduction Fund. The Fund will be used for the purpose of -

- (i) investment in training and empowerment;
- (ii) investment in equipment and technology;
- (iii) research programmes;
- (iv) assistance to casualties following natural calamities, and
- (v) provision of temporary shelter amenities to victims of calamities.

Madam Speaker, the fourth issue that I wanted to address is based on the creation of a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee of local authorities, which is welcoming. I welcome this excellent initiative to involve the local authorities in the fight against disaster risk reduction. The local authorities have often been blamed for issuing building permits on wetlands. I have myself witnessed a series of *morcellements* in my constituency where residential and even commercial units have been erected on wetlands. Today, there are still attempts by some promoters to seek permits for the construction of villa projects on wetlands.

I believe that representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management have to form part of the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee. In the Bill as it is now, representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management do not form part of the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee. I suggest that they should be present in that Committee because they will have an important role to play whenever there is consideration to be given where permits have to be issued for construction purposes by the local authorities.

The inclusion of these representatives will ensure the following -

- (i) the follow-up on all *morcellement* permits about to be approved by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for that local authority, and
- (ii) follow-up on all EIA submitted in the region of the local authority.

The Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee should help to bring a better coordination in the works of the different authorities in view of promoting better discipline in the construction sector. It is expected that such collaboration will contribute in –

- (i) eliminating the issue of permits for construction on wetlands;
- (ii) identify and manage flood prone areas;
- (iii) working out relocation plans for inhabitants of flood prone areas, and
- (iv) effective allocation of resources for disaster risk reduction.

Finally, Madam Speaker, on the structure and functioning, I have always emphasised on the need to have the best people in structures of institutions in view of ensuring that at the end of the day we have results and objectives met timely. I have noted that the participation

of the private sector in the different structures is very limited. I would suggest that we gradually find ways and means to call representatives from the private sector, especially in the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee. The fight against national calamities is the responsibility of one and all, but certainly that of the private sector as well. They should be encouraged and allowed to participate fully in the process.

I would like to thank again all those who have contributed in the drafting and preparation of the Bill and congratulate them. Thank you for your attention.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. François!

(6.01 p.m.)

Mr F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Madam Speaker, I stand in support of this timely National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill 2016 for our vulnerable Republic, which could, at any time, be hit by any disaster.

First of all, I want to thank the hon. Minister, Mr Wong Yen Cheong and all the technicians for bringing this Bill forward. I also congratulate all previous orators before me.

Madam Speaker, you will recall cyclones Carol in 1960; Gervaise in 1975; Celine in 1979; Bella in 1991, and Kalundé in 2003. Natural disasters are in an increasing trend today as a result of poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, poor land use planning as rightly pointed out by hon. Minister Baboo.

Madam Speaker, the main object of this Bill provides for four pillars of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, that is, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Reference has been made to Sendai Blueprint Priority Actions from Japan framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which is exemplary for how each nation should approach disaster risk. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to cite only two priority actions: to ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. Priority action (5) says ‘to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response to all levels’.

Madam Speaker, for us here, following the international trend, there is a shift from response to relief and really focus in approach to becoming mitigation and preparedness oriented. This is what this Government is trying to do. Madam Speaker, this Bill is crucial to

permit Government to fulfil its constitutional responsibility as per article 3(a) - the protection, safety and security of our citizens during any disaster.

Hon. Bhagwan, rightly argued that Mauritius needs a fully automated early warning system for incoming surges, tidal surge and swell waves.

Madam Speaker, the Republic of Mauritius is actually the first Small Island Developing State to have a fully operational Early Warning System for improving preparedness and resilience to extreme events like storms, tidal surge since September 2015.

I understand that the EWS (Early Warning System) will allow the coastal communities of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon to receive timely alerts up to three days in advance for safe evacuation.

Madam Speaker, I have checked the list of cyclones within the 100 kilometres belt around the Republic of Mauritius since 1945 to date from Metéo Vacoas. It is clear that our Republic is extremely vulnerable to cyclone. However, while a cyclone is the most frequent hazard, earthquakes and tsunamis are potentially the most damaging and disruptive hazards that we may face nowadays.

Madam Speaker, geographically speaking, Rodrigues is located closely to the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone and the Tectonic Active Areas of the Rodrigues Seismic Ridge. I mentioned this because I am talking about the hazard of earthquakes.

According to Mr Prem Sadal, in l'Express dated 08 November 2015, Rodrigues location near the triple junction of the tectonically active subduction zone, generate frequent seismic activities. Here, I believe that this Bill must allow for further investigation in that regard.

Madam Speaker, coming to some few cross-cutting issues of the Bill, the National Council is the supreme body for Disaster Risk Reduction Management according to the Bill. Along a gender perspective, I appreciate that the hon. Minister has considered my proposal that a representative of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare forms part of the National Council as per amendment circulated. Why? Because the implication of gender and family will enhance its involvement through psycho-social problems and social safety net in order to mitigate the psychological damage of vulnerable families particularly children, women, poor and disabled persons in the aftermath of any disaster. I have in mind the pictures of these families during 30 March flash floods in Port Louis and their sufferings.

Madam Speaker, further in gender, there is today a gender networking which is taking place at the international level as it is the case in countries like Australia and Austria. Australia set up what we call a Gender and Disaster Task Force and Austria set up what we call a Women Exchange for Disaster Risk Reduction respectively.

Madam Speaker, coming to development and planning, disaster risk is spatial in nature and is interconnected with development and planning.

In section 6 of the Bill, it is stipulated that the National Council shall ensure that disaster reduction becomes part of an integral objective of environmental -related policies and plans, land use planning, and so on, as well as infrastructure through enforcement of building codes - very important works.

We have witnessed in our Republic unsustainable development sometimes, unplanned urbanisation, environmental degradation and inappropriate land use through local examples such as what we witnessed at Canal Dayot, Fond du Sac, Mont Gout floodings and Chitrakoot landslide. These are a few examples.

Madam Speaker, you will imagine that the Planning and Development Act 2004, after 12 years, only a few sections have been proclaimed. This Bill will engage new policy commitments and initiatives for our National Development Strategy in relation to development and planning, our national coastal erosion strategy, our integrated coastal zone management policy, agriculture policy, forestry, and national bio-diversity policy.

In the same breath, tourism development policies shall protect and preserve sensitive coastal zones, environmental sensitive areas and sand dunes. We must be bold enough to take drastic policies for no further development in these sensitive zones, if we really want to develop a new environmental culture and be sustainable.

This Bill will encourage the revision of existing and the development of new building codes, standards, rehabilitation and reconstruction practices, particularly in informal and marginal human settlements with a view to fostering disaster resistant structures.

Madam Speaker, in Rodrigues, the Chief Commissioner, Serge Clair and the OPR party from a social and political perspective argued that and I will say that in Creole –

“Nous bizin fini avec sa banne ti lacaze tole qui meme pas capave resister un cyclone. Bizin aide banne dimoune pauvre ek vulnerable par ene bon lacaze en dur pou nou na pas gagne tracas ler ena gros cyclone.”

Madam Speaker, with regard to construction materials, the quality of iron bars on the market is very poor. People out there are saying that *zordi ferraille pe rouiller, gonfler, apres éclater bizarrement*. This is what people are saying out there. There is need to incorporate disaster resistant planning and resilient construction decisions in our built environment. This must also apply to the coming new concept of smart cities as priority for a Smart Cities Disaster and Climate Resilience Strategy.

Madam Speaker, New Zealand provides a model for other countries wishing to reduce the risk from hazards and to respond more effectively to disasters due to its progressive approaches to emergency management.

Madam Speaker, the 78th *Fédération internationale des géomètres* Working Week 2016 will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, between 02 and 06 May 2016 for surveyors and spatial professionals all around the world. The theme of the Working Week is very important – Recovery from Disaster, which reflects New Zealand's experience recovering from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake sequels.

Madam Speaker, our surveyors and spatial professionals are key actors in making an important contribution to improve, simplify and shorten the disaster mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. Why do I raise that? Because in this context, I do hope that the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands, hon. Soodhun, will ensure the participation of our surveyors and spatial professionals in this coming international conference in New Zealand. Very important about this experience, this sharing of experience from other countries from this perspective of spatial professionals and surveyors.

Coming to the sustainable development goals, Madam Speaker, our Republic today is on this pathway towards achieving and enhancing sustainable development goals. Goal 13 of the United Nations 17 sustainable development goals is to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact, to strengthen resilience - very important words - and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. The Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as reported by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in 2004, stated that sustainable development goals cannot be achieved without managing disaster risk.

Madam Speaker, the international community including our Republic, of course, is committed to recognising resilience as fundamental to the achievement of three key international agendas, namely –

- Sustainable development goals - as I have just mentioned above
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction Risk 2015-2030
- The United Nations COP 21 Paris Universal Climate Change Agreement in 2015, including the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Impacts and Climate Change.

Coming to climate change and Paris COP 21 Agreement, Madam Speaker, Article 2 of the COP 21 Paris Agreement aims, and I quote –

“(...) to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, (...)”

“Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.”

Madam Speaker, before going further, allow me to put on record the patriotic work and commitment carried out by the high-level delegation from Mauritius in Paris COP 21 in December last, under the leadership of the former Minister of Environment, my good friend, hon. Dayal. I am sure hon. Dayal will canvass what Mauritius contributed in Paris COP 21 Agreement. My heartfelt appreciation also goes to the tireless two public officers from the Ministry of Environment, namely the Permanent Secretary, Mr Jadoo, and the Divisional Environment Officer, Mr Seewoobaduth, for their commitment in the national interest, without dinner at times, till very late to follow all negotiations. Congratulations, fellows!

Madam Speaker, climate change is real and is happening quicker than we think, and it is inevitable. Yes, it is real. During a net fishing trip in Rodrigues I undertook a month ago, I have witnessed the consequences of hot sea water through bleaching of corals and the amount of dead fishes around the lagoon. Further, in Rodrigues, Madam Speaker, in the context of climate change and to mark the World Earth Day 2016 on 22 April 2016, I will embark the population of Rodrigues to become resilient to the challenges ahead. What I am planning to do together with the newly set-up Citizen Advice Bureau of Rodrigues, we have scheduled a post COP 21 half-day campaign awareness talk in collaboration with the Rodrigues Council of Social Services, involving all the presidents of the 100 community villages in Rodrigues and their environment responsible persons, using a bottom-up approach to share what I have

learnt and observed in Paris and to explore our actions and way forward with regard to climate change.

Le thème de la rencontre est « Agir ensemble contre le changement climatique, la planète terre, l'urgence climatique, et Rodrigues, notre pays, notre avenir, une prise et un réveil de conscience. » Voilà le thème de cette rencontre qui aura lieu à Rodrigues, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker, in addition, I believe that it is high time for the introduction of a Climate Change Bill to achieving climate change outcomes, which implies budgetary provisions as well.

Coming to response and recovery, Madam Speaker, effective emergency preparedness and disaster reduction requires the participation of the entire community and all levels of Government. This Bill will encourage our Republic to deepen its culture of mobilisation, solidarity and social responsiveness and trust in Government in emergency situations. The Cuba Disaster Risk Reduction Model, which I have read - very important for reference - evacuated 700,000 people in less than 48 hours when Hurricane Michelle struck in November 2001, according to Red Cross International.

I think this model shall inspire our Republic and, Madam Speaker, I believe that every institution and single citizen of our Republic must be embarked on track towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience against natural hazards and must be well familiar with the concepts and practice of disaster risk reduction and this is where that comes to education, and rightly the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research has embarked in the 9-year Schooling Educational Reform, which, we, in Rodrigues, fully support as well. Here, I would suggest that Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Post Disaster Relief and Recovery be introduced as a module within the higher education, research and awareness courses in our universities, colleges and school curriculum.

Tertiary institutions such as the Open University of Mauritius, dispensing courses in Disaster Management, should be called upon to play a stronger role for capacity-building, including training, research, documentation and policy advocacy on all aspects of disaster management.

Madam Speaker, in relation to poverty there is a proposed Marshall Plan by the hon. Minister for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. This Bill must incorporate

disaster risk assessment into the planning and management of disaster prone, highly vulnerable populated settlements, *les zones avec des poches de pauvreté, avec des plans géographiques très spécifiques et bien définis*. We need what I call Hazard and Disaster Vulnerability Spatial Maps which have to be drawn to identify these highest zones of risk in our Republic.

Madam Speaker, before concluding, I will just say a few words on Rodrigues. I have to say that I have taken good note of the valuable consideration given to Rodrigues in this Bill. The functions of the Bill have been decentralised to Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the Rodrigues Disaster Risk Management Council through the Rodrigues Crisis Committee, the Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and Rodrigues Emergency Operations Command.

Madam Speaker, the Rodrigues Police Division, as per the Bill, in the event of a disaster, shall be the lead disaster response operations. And I will say that despite the fact that Rodrigues Police shall be the Response Institution, I will suggest the setting-up of a well-equipped - with logistics - and trained Police Specialised Disaster Response Unit in Rodrigues as well. In the same breath, I would say and reiterate the purchase of an armoured vehicle for emergency purposes in Rodrigues which is long-awaited.

Madam Speaker, another very important observation of this Bill in the case of Rodrigues is that the various institutions provided by the Bill, apart from the Police, fall under the aegis of the Chief Commissioner's Office. In section 32, I am happy to say that the chairmanship of the Rodrigues Crisis Committee, as per amendment circulated, will be chaired by the Chief Commissioner and the Vice-Chairperson a public officer. This is good because it will keep a flow of authority and political control during any emergency or disaster. The fact that this Bill considers the autonomous functionality of Rodrigues reveals that Government understands that disasters do not affect places, people and sectors in our Republic in the same way or to the same extent. For example, following the 02 March Indonesia earthquake, the Australian Tsunami Service Provider cited only Rodrigues as being under threat in the Indian Ocean by the earthquake, just to substantiate what I just said before.

Madam Speaker, Rodrigues must be able also to manage in moments of crisis, without having to wait for long for support from mainland Mauritius in case both islands are under crisis.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, I fully support the introduction of this National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (No. II of 2016) and I also commend the Bill to the House.

Madam Speaker, I am done, and I thank you for your kind attention.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dayal!

(6.26 p.m.)

Mr R. Dayal (First Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Madam Speaker, this Bill, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill, has to be viewed in the context of the urgency and the state of emergency posed by climate change with all its uncertainties and unpredictability and all that it triggers more specifically in terms of more violent cyclones, intense storm surges and tsunamis causing coastal inundations with heavy beach erosion, landslides, flash floods with multiple fatalities exemplified by flooding at Mon Goût where I deponed and proposed for the creation of a Disaster Management Centre in the hon. Judge Bhushan Domah Select Committee. The recommendation was accepted and a Disaster Management Centre was created and is a reality today.

Also, the 30th March 2013 flash floods claiming numerous lives, more than 10, which showed the absence of leadership, command, control and communication. This Bill is very timely in the wake of climate change and I am intervening in this Bill, as the former Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management, with more than 30 years of disaster management with outstanding success. I had the privilege to represent the Government of Mauritius in the first World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Yokohama, Japan, in May 1994, and where I intervened and Yokohama declarations have it in terms of priorities -

Priority 1 - Understanding disasters;

Priority 2 - Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;

Priority 3 - Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience;

Priority 4 - Enhancing disasters preparedness for effective response and to «Build Better» in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

This Bill has encompassed the Yokohama declaration and the Sendai declaration philosophies and strategies to protect life and property, manage disasters linking all stakeholders to ensure proper success whilst ensuring sustainable development and, here, the

political will of this Government has to be highlighted. This Bill is a clear indication of the political will of the Government to proactively, actively and reactively meet the challenges posed by climate change in terms of adaptation and mitigation strategies and also including disaster management with the hon. Minister of Environment Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management. This political will is based on vision. We, as the Government, recognise the close relationship between disaster reduction and sustainable development, including disaster management, building from the Hyogo Framework for building resilience of the communities to face disasters with confidence. The political will is tangible in this Bill to protect life and property whilst ensuring sustainable development with capacity-building, optimising on resources available with collective responsibility.

The rationale behind disaster management is intricately linked with the risks and vulnerabilities inherent in the geological morphology of the Mauritian territory posed by climate change to the nation's physical environment by land and sea in its multifarious ramifications of hardening of targets, more so with the advent of earthquakes. When I committed pen to paper to review the drafting of this Bill, I had in mind the five key concepts of disaster management –

- (i) proper command and control and communication to ensure timely getting of responses in terms of strategies and dealing with crisis situations;
- (ii) hardening of targets through preparedness, mitigation, adaptation and recovery;
- (iii) human factor engineering, in all its ramifications, to have everybody on board for proper disaster management;
- (iv) all inclusive resilience, force incorporation of the conceptualisation of early warning and other warning systems for capacity building and community involvement. Hence, taking MACOSS on board with hundreds of NGOs, and
- (v) empowering all stakeholders with the right skills and knowledge, optimising the use of human and material resources in the Republic of Mauritius to meet disasters in a sensitised manner with the optimum level of preparedness and for proper relief operations.

I had equally in mind how to integrate re-engineering technology with green technology in the conceptualisation of modern infrastructure and the physical urbanisation of the Mauritian territory for adaptation, mitigation and “build better.” In this spirit, we included the Smart City concept where the compendium of environmental guidelines to harden all

targets within the ambit of risks and vulnerabilities, hazards and calamities of all types, notwithstanding the human factor engineering at all levels with decision-making and ensuring timely command control and communication. This Bill must be read in conjunction with already in force integrated concepts, strategies and realistic schemes based on Mauritian realities.

New innovative concepts of dealing with the urgency posed by climate change, to deal with coastal erosion and to do away with “gabions” - unfortunately the former Minister is not here - which has been a public waste and embracing sand engineering techniques.

This is tangible when referring to the main object of this Bill which is to provide for -

- (a) prevention and reduction of the risks of disasters;
- (b) mitigation of the adverse impacts of disasters;
- (c) disaster preparedness;
- (d) effective response through disasters, and
- (e) management of post-disaster activities, including recovery and rehabilitation.

All the objects of the Bill can be realistically realised with proper leadership at command, control and communication at all levels with professional mastery of all the phases inherent in the disaster clock proactively, actively and reactively with human factor engineering.

This Bill provides for a legal framework as it befits *un État de droit* and it is coming from this Government with provision for the setting up of a Council in terms of policy, strategic framework and management plans at all levels contrary to what used to be in the past. Unfortunately they are not here to listen.

This Bill caters for a National Centre for coordinating, monitoring the implementation of disaster risk reduction and management activities as per the national strategic framework and plan. This is to ensure timely response by the National Emergency Operations Command (NEOC), supported by the Local Emergency Operations Command (LEOC), the Rodrigues (REOC), that of Agalega and St. Brandon.

This Government, faced with the urgency of climate change, gave the Republic of Mauritius an Early Warning System for storm surge and also engineered the construction of a coastal refuge centre at Quatre Soeurs, the first of its kind in this part of the World as a SIDS PIED. This initiative has been applauded regionally and internationally and has laid the foundation for a Wave Early Warning System, sparing no effort to bring state-of-the-art

innovative technology to enhance capacity building for resilience and adaptation strategies and hardening of targets for mitigating risk and vulnerabilities.

The harmonisation of Early Warning Mechanism, Madam Speaker, with community participation cannot be overemphasised to secure lives and properties and to ensure the successful implementation of all disaster-related measures. Global warming and the advent of sea water level rise have also been taken on board for coastal contingencies and seas. Hopefully, the Global Green Fund for which I was very vociferous in COP 21 and emanating from COP 21 in Paris, for which I pledged, will help to provide the essential financial resources for adaptation and mitigation schemes, knowing the paucity of financial resources in our Republic. My proposal is –

- (i) under Part II, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Council, clause 4 (2) to add after (y), ‘a representative of MACOSS’ because we want the whole society to be involved in disaster management;
- (ii) under Part II again, clause 8 Meetings of National Council, subsection (1), to replace the wordings ‘every 3 months’ with ‘every month’ because the cyclonic period starts on 01 November and ends on 15 May each year and there is a need for an inclusive and resilient society. Therefore, the Council has to meet regularly and once per month is not too much.

I would like to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for bringing disaster management in the Ministry of Environment because environment and disasters are intricately linked. Therefore, for sustainable development, it has to be a Ministry where all these things could be engineered for the highest interests of our Republic.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(6.38 p.m.)

Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the debate today.

(Interruptions)

Disaster risk reduction aims to reduce the cause by natural hazards like storms, earthquakes, floods, droughts, cyclones, landslides, tsunamis, wild fires, volcanos, etc. We know that we cannot prevent a hazard from happening, but we can prevent it to be a disaster. Disaster risk reduction can be a reality through an ethic of prevention. A nation can be either more resilient or more vulnerable to disaster. It depends on how a Government is proactive

in setting the right mechanism, training to the personnel, allocation of resources and funds to avoid the bad consequences of natural hazards. It depends, for example, on our general culture, on how we build our houses, offices and high-rise buildings.

The consequences of the hazards like floods, for example, could be less damaging if a well-studied plan is drawn in accordance with the topography of the land and climate conditions existing in our country. Disaster risk reduction, by definition, is – one of the definitions existing - I quote –

“The concept and practice of reducing disaster risk through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the casual factors of disasters.”

It is today a general concern. It is a worldwide concern. All the population is concerned with risk management. It is how to lessening vulnerability of people and property when having a hazard. We need wise management of land and the environment. We need to develop a culture of prevention as from school level. We need to invest in appropriate equipment, in awareness campaign, education, good training in law, etc. We must not hesitate to put all our strength, means and resources towards our objectives. Prevention pays; it is our choice.

From year 2000 to 2011, 2.7 billion of people were affected with hazards and 1.3 trillion of dollars lost. So, we need to develop a culture of prevention and not a culture of reaction. We cannot prevent a hazard from happening, but we can prevent it from becoming a disaster, and we can mitigate the impact. So, we have to learn about the risk, bring people together, review our policies, laws, as we are doing today. We need to make a nation resilient; we need to invest in urban planning, taking into consideration risk disaster while setting our urban planning. We need to educate the population, develop awareness through normal school curriculum. We need the participation of the population. We need a sustainable development. We must invest today for a safer tomorrow.

In Mauritius, Madam Speaker, we have developed a culture of building houses strong enough to resist cyclones. Sometimes even, we exaggerate in our structural design, in our objective to build strong buildings. It's not the case for countries which are not cyclonic countries. Since 1960s, I mean, since we have had cyclones Carol and Alix, we have developed a culture of building houses resistant to cyclones and sometimes without even caring for the esthetical design of the building. This culture has been developing as a reaction

to cyclones Carol and Alix in those days. Now, we need to adopt the same culture in building our drains, rivulets, bridges, roads, underpass, overpass, overhead crossings, etc.

Madam Speaker, these past two decades, we have been witnessing in Mauritius construction of many public infrastructures which ignore completely the topography of the land and which do not take into consideration the possibility of flooding. And more shocking, Madam Speaker, is the destruction of natural drains or covering of existing drains as in Jardin de La Compagnie, Rogers House, Air Mauritius parking, the Medcor building, erection of building nearby KFC on La Chaussée Bridge, as if the new generation of engineers and architects were challenging infrastructures as they were hundred years ago. You know, Madam Speaker, what was the result of such a wrong practice? Flooding, loss of life, important material losses and loss of money!

Many *morcellements*, today, around the country, are being constructed on wetlands, on natural drains or nearby. Today, these regions on the nearby are regularly flooded after a normal rainfall. So, Madam Speaker, everyone is concerned at the level of responsibility; whether it is village council, district council, municipality, Central Government, we are all concerned. So, we need to create awareness at all levels of the public sector first, then at the level of local authorities, village councils and municipalities. We need to take on board also Real Estate developers, engineers, architects. Government must, according to me, start by uncovering the drains at Jardin de La Compagnie, at Rogers House parking, at Medcor building. We must remove the KFC building on the bridge at La Chaussée. In fact, we must stop *le massacre* done by some famous engineers, and we must reinstate the sites where all these wrongdoings have been fatal and damaging to our country.

Madam Speaker, this is a very good piece of legislation. It sets all the necessary responsible organs at different levels and allows the interaction upwards, downwards and across all structural bodies of the public management. To make it a success, we need capable people, well-trained, dynamic personnel, specialists of risk disaster management. Efficiency must be the main objective at all levels.

I wish this legislation would give us a new vision of our environment management, making sustainable management a matter of national interest. May this legislation also give birth to a new generation of engineers, architects, builders and developers who must be sensible to disaster risk reduction! But they must be generally more sensible to the issue of environment itself. We must take into consideration all our topographic problems in

Mauritius, our weakness and strength before designing or building here and there without taking into consideration of the risks that they are doing to this country.

So, we need, Madam Speaker, not only to take care of our country, but to make sure that our planet be sustainable. Our small island is an example in taking this matter very seriously. May all the population give a helpful hand to the Government and make it a reality for the coming generation!

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Alain Wong Yen Cheong!

(6.50 p.m.)

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr A. Wong Yen Cheong): Madam Speaker, it was high time to address the issue of disaster risk governance at national level, having in place a robust legal framework to better face the challenges which the country is facing in the wake of disasters of greater magnitude and intensity, due to their effect of climate change is overdue.

This will also enable our country to play a lead role at regional level in terms of disaster risk reduction and management. Just from January this year, more than 135 people lost their lives in disasters such as earthquakes in Taiwan, flash floods in Louisiana and Pakistan, and cyclones in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to note that there is consensus in this House on the national importance of this piece of legislation. I have taken good note of all hon. Members of this House - there were nine of them -, about their willingness to help and collaborate, and also about all their propositions.

With these concluding remarks, Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT BILL

(NO. II of 2016)

Clause 1 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2 (Interpretation)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 2 -

“in the definition of “emergency services”, in paragraph (b), by inserting, after the words “Mauritius Police Force,”, the words “the National Centre, the Rodrigues Centre,”;”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (National Council)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments in clause 4 (2) –

- “(i) in paragraph (b), by deleting the words “, who shall be the Vice-chairperson”;
- (ii) by inserting, after paragraph (k), the following new paragraph, paragraphs (l) to (y) being relettered as paragraphs (m) to (z);
 - (l) the supervising officer or a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of gender equality;
- (iii) in the newly relettered paragraph (y), by deleting the word “and”;
- (iv) by adding the following new paragraph, the full stop at the end of the newly relettered paragraph (z) being deleted and replaced by the words “; and” –

- (za) a representative of the Mauritius Council of Social Service.”

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8 (Meetings of National Council)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments in clause 8 -

- “(i) in sub clause (1), by deleting the words “3 months” and replacing them by the word “month”;
- (ii) in sub clause (2), by deleting the words “Vice-chairperson shall” and replacing them by the words “members present shall elect from among themselves a member to”;

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 9 to 14 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 15 (National Crisis Committee)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 15(1)(b) -

“by deleting the words “or his representative, who shall be the vice-chairperson”;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 16 to 31 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 32 (Rodrigues Crisis Committee)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendments in clause 32 -

- “(i) by deleting paragraph (a) and replacing it by the following paragraph –
- (a) the Chief Commissioner, who shall be the chairperson;
- (ii) by inserting, after paragraph (a), the following new paragraph, paragraphs (b) to (e) being relettered as paragraphs (c) to (f) –
- (b) the Island Chief Executive;”

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 32, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 33 to 46 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (No. II of 2016) was read a third time and passed.

(6.58 p.m.)

Second Reading

THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSERS (REPEAL) BILL

(NO. III OF 2016)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan): Madam Speaker, I move that the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (Repeal) Bill (No. III of 2016) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of the Bill that we have before the House today concerns the repeal of the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA) Act 1996.

I wish to inform the House, at the very outset, Madam Speaker, that it is not certainly with a *gaieté de coeur* that I am introducing this Bill in Parliament today. The decision to

wind up NATReSA has been taken *après mûre réflexion* whilst considering its *parcours* over the past few years and after an objective assessment of its work.

For Members of the House who are not familiar with the history of the NATReSA, it would be good to remember that the NATReSA was set up in September 1996, as a body corporate under the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity, following the restructure of the defunct Trust Fund for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts.

At that time, Madam Speaker, substance abuse, drug trafficking and the country's degrading social situation were a matter of serious concern to Government. The idea behind the setting up of NATReSA was to complement Government's action in having a drug/substance free society by the prevention of substance abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers and facilitating their integration in the mainstream society through a multi-disciplinary approach.

In line with this purpose, the NATReSA was entrusted with the following responsibilities -

- (i) coordinate and facilitate efforts at national level towards the implementation of programmes for the prevention of substance abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers;
- (ii) complement existing facilities for -
 - (a) the prevention of substance abuse;
 - (b) the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers;
- (iii) mobilise resources locally and overseas for the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers, and
- (iv) set up and manage institutions for the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers;
- (v) provide after-care services for the rehabilitation of substance abusers, and
- (vi) advise, guide and help voluntary social organisations engaged in the prevention of substance abuse and in the treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers.

Twelve years later, Madam Speaker, that is, in September 2008, the NATReSA migrated to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life as it was felt then, that this Ministry was better suited to deal with issues pertaining to substance abuse, be it alcohol, tobacco or dangerous drugs.

Irrespective of whether it was under the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity or under that of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the NATReSA was always provided with all the necessary support including financial and human resources, and the required legal framework and autonomy to enable it to fulfill its role effectively and safely with a view to obtaining tangible and measurable results.

For instance, the management of the NATReSA was entrusted to a Board with a view to keeping it far from bureaucratic hurdles and constraints and enabling it to respond rapidly to emerging drug related challenges.

Madam Speaker, it was also provided with the necessary personnel, some of whom were redeployed from ex-Trust Fund I mentioned earlier. These officers had the necessary knowledge and experience and the skills in the field of substance abuse.

In terms of funding, although section 9(a) of the NATReSA Act provides for the NATReSA to ‘receive funds from the Government and raise funds from other sources for the prevention of substance abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers’, however, its source of funding up to now has been exclusively from Government grants.

What I want to highlight, Madam Speaker, is that *toutes les conditions étaient réunies* to allow the NATReSA to be successful in its mandate and to fulfil its mission. Unfortunately, this did not happen. I am sure that the whole House will agree with me that the NATReSA has been a major disappointment in the realm of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of substance abuse in the country. With a few prevention campaigns here and there, from time to time, the NATReSA has neither been able to be in the frontline nor play a leading role in curbing the drug scourge. It has failed to rise to the occasion and it has unfortunately not been pro-active when its primary role was to deal with substance abuse at the national level.

Madam Speaker, shortly after I took office as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, I initiated a cost benefit and cost effectiveness assessment of all parastatal bodies falling under my Ministry. NATReSA was one of them. In the course of the assessment, the following came to light –

- (i) NATReSA was not fulfilling most of its objectives as set out in section 4 of the parent Act;
- (ii) NATReSA has become a body responsible for grants. Its operation is limited essentially to the allocation of a monthly grant to 10 NGOs in Mauritius and

two in Rodrigues, presumably involved in the prevention of substance abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers.

It may be good for me to give the details of the grants and the bodies that received the grants

SN	Name of NGOs	Monthly Grant
1	Centre de Solidarité pour une Nouvelle Vie	Rs370,000
2	Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge	Rs215,000
3	Sangram Sewa Sadan	Rs120,000
4	HELP De Addiction Centre	Rs110,000
5	Dr. I. Goomany Treatment Centre	Rs165,000
6	Chrysalide Centre	Rs40,000
7	Groupe Renaissance de Mahebourg	Rs10,000
8	ACTReSA- Human Service Trust (Ayurveda)	Rs70,000
9	Etoile d'Espérance–Association Alcool	Rs140,000
10	LACAZ A	Rs30,000
11	Centre d'Accueil et de Réhabilitation de St Gabriel Rodrigues	Rs70,000
12	Centre Alcoologie, Rodrigues	Rs70,000
	TOTAL	Rs1,410,000

It is to be pointed out, Madam Speaker, that apart from the allocation of grants to the two NGOs in Rodrigues, NATReSA has not carried out any prevention treatment and rehabilitation programmes for substance abusers in Rodrigues.

The House may also wish to note that the NATReSA costs Government over Rs40 m. annually. For the financial year 2015/2016, the grant allocated to NATReSA is to the tune of Rs41,175,000 out of which Rs23,175,000 is to meet the cost of its annual recurrent expenditure including fees payable to its Board and Rs18 m. is to be allocated to the 12 NGOs under its Rehabilitation Programme for Alcoholics and Drug Addicts.

- (iii) the Harm Reduction Unit of my Ministry had worked out a strategy plan for NATReSA in 2014, which it has not implemented. In fact, it should have been NATReSA working out the strategic plan for the Harm Reduction Unit;
- (iv) since its inception, NATReSA has been focusing on prevention programmes, which have not evolved over the years to meet the ever changing environment for substance abuse;
- (v) NATReSA has not had the expected impact given that the number of substance abusers among students, youth and the community at large has not shown any decline;
- (vi) NATReSA does not have its own treatment and rehabilitation programme. Its role has been limited to allocate a monthly grant to NGOs providing codeine and methadone base treatment and operating as rehabilitation centres;
- (vii) NATReSA does not exercise adequate monitoring and follow-up to ensure that the funds allocated to the NGOs are used for the purpose for which they are actually meant and on the outcome thereof, i.e., the number of beneficiaries being treated and rehabilitated;
- (viii) two of the NGOs receiving a grant from NATReSA also derive an annual grant from my Ministry;
- (ix) although NATReSA is expected to keep abreast of latest information on all issues relating to its mandate, it has not been vigilant enough to detect the emergence of synthetic drugs among youngsters and to take timely actions to prevent their proliferation, and

- (x) there is much overlap in the programmes of the Harm Reduction Unit of my Ministry and that of NATReSA. This calls for urgent synchronisation of actions so as to avoid duplication of efforts and wastage of public funds.

Madam Speaker, NATReSA could have played the role of an apex body harmonising the work of the NGOs with the resources of my Ministry to really curb the prevalence of dangerous of drugs and substance abuse.

Following these findings and these observations, I had consultations, Madam Speaker, with the staff of NATReSA in mid-2015, to explore avenues for better governance and a results-oriented approach and attitude. I regret to have to admit that the NATReSA did not improve. There are inherent weaknesses and dysfunctioning at all levels of NATReSA. As a follow-up, in December 2015, I had a further assessment carried out which confirmed the findings I just mentioned and also the findings of a previous assessment carried out in 2012 by officers of my Ministry on the activities of NATReSA.

Madam Speaker, the House would surely understand how distressing it is to note that despite such negative findings since 2012, the NATReSA, as an institution, did not improve. These shortcomings of the NATReSA called for urgent action and a paradigm shift in our strategies to be able to respond in a more dynamic and proactive manner to the challenges posed by substance and drug abuse. Again, in the light of these circumstances, and also with a view to improving efficiency, effectiveness and ensuring judicious use of public funds, that the decision to wind up NATReSA was taken.

The House may wish to note that the repeal of the NATReSA Act will not affect the ongoing programmes on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers as same are already being carried out by the Harm Reduction Unit of my Ministry. Instead, my Ministry proposes to set up a comprehensive Substance Abuse Unit and will insist on the need for NGOs benefiting from grants from the Government for the 'Rehabilitation Programme for alcoholics and drug Addicts' to provide all necessary information as and when requested and to ensure that those in need of help are effectively given the support and social accompaniment by the NGO.

As regards the personnel of the NATReSA, which presently consists of 16 officers, holding permanent and pensionable posts, following consultations I had with them, they have all expressed, in writing, their willingness to be absorbed in my Ministry. The modalities for

their redeployment are being finalised with the relevant authorities in accordance with the prevailing legislation. It is to be highlighted, Madam Speaker, that the terms and conditions of their employment in my Ministry will not be less favourable than those of their present employment.

If, for any reason, anyone of them is no more interested to join my Ministry, they will be given the possibility to retire on grounds of abolition of office and will be paid their pension benefits. The system for the pension benefits will be applicable as follows -

- (a) total fund balance in the NATReSA Pension Fund will be transferred to the Government;
- (b) NATReSA will be removed from the schedule to the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act;
- (c) NATReSA Repeal Act will clearly mention that, notwithstanding the provisions of the Pensions Act, the existing pensioners of NATReSA will be deemed to be pensioners of the Government, and
- (d) once all this is done, Government will take responsibility for the payment of pensions to present and future pensioners of the defunct NATReSA.

With regard to the 12 NGOs, Madam Speaker, benefitting from a grant from the NATReSA, arrangements have been made for them to receive their monthly funding from my Ministry. The NGOs would have to comply, however, with the conditions of the financial regulations as set out in their respective grant memorandum and which concern essentially the need for transparency, accountability and the absolute necessity to show results.

Action will also be taken to review the grant to the NGOs which are receiving double grants, that is, both from my Ministry and the NATReSA.

Madam Speaker, the merging of the staff of the NATReSA with my Ministry will bring efficiency gains and a more coordinated and effective response to the challenges of drug abuse and the rehabilitation of the victims of substance abuse.

Madam Speaker, the decision to wind up the NATReSA should have been taken a long time back. Having gone into the history of the NATReSA and having made a very fair and honest assessment of what it ought to have done but did not do, I believe this Bill is the best option that we could have.

I wish to reassure the House that this issue of substance abuse will be kept under constant review at my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, the history of NATReSA is one of a catalogue of missed opportunities. On a more general note, once an institution which is designed to be *'sur le terrain'* becomes 'bureaucratised', then it loses focus and its mission gets derailed. That is, unfortunately, the legacy of NATReSA, but I will ensure, Madam Speaker, that the Harm Reduction Unit of my Ministry – which will be further restructured and strengthened by bringing under one 'leadership' all the programmes that deal directly or indirectly with the vexed issue of substance abuse will be set up as soon as possible. The officers in that Unit will no longer be desk-bound; they will be where the action is and where the target people are.

In fact, Madam Speaker, had NATReSA lived up to its priority mandate, the drug scene in our country would have been different. It would not have been necessary, probably, for Government, in 2015, to set up a Commission of Inquiry on Dangerous Drugs chaired by former Justice Lam Shang Leen, with very wide terms of reference.

I am confident that, with my Ministry in the driving seat for dealing with substance abuse, we will be able to meet the challenges posed by this scourge.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Quirin rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

(7.17 p.m.)

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 19 April 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

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

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Hon. Members, I have a long list of Members who wish to intervene on adjournment matters today. In fact, I have got 10 Members and, as you are aware, we have only 30

minutes for adjournment matters. So, I make an appeal to all Members to be brief. Not only brief, but very, very brief, so as to make your case, but at the same time to allow the Ministers to reply within 30 minutes.

MATTERS RAISED

(7.18 p.m.)

PETITE RIVIERE - MORCELLEMENT GHURBURRUN - BUS SERVICE & ROAD WIDENING

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): I shall be very brief, Madam Speaker. I would just like to draw the attention of the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport concerning the urgent problem of the inhabitants of *Morcellement Ghurburrun* at Petit Verger Road, Petite Rivière. *Morcellement Ghurburrun* has just been annexed to my constituency before the general election. They have an urgent problem with the National Transport Authority and also with regard to security along Petit Verger Road. I have already drawn the attention of the Minister some time back, the matter is of extreme urgency, and I shall appreciate if the hon. Minister could direct the NTA to deal with the problem of bus availability and also with the RDA to see what can be done with regard to the enlargement of the road.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Madam Speaker, I will look into the matter.

MITD - NC NO. 3 ELECTRICITY SUBJECT – EXAMINATION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a matter, which will be addressed to the hon. Minister of Education, and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, who is also responsible for the MITD. It concerns the examinations for the NC No. 3 Electricity subject where the candidates have sat for the said exams some six months back and, up to now, there has been no result published. Each time the candidates and parents call at the MITD, they are told that the results will be available very soon. So, may I ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter?

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): I will certainly look into the matter.

ALBION BEACH – SECURITY MEASURES

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Madame la présidente, ma requête ce soir s'adresse à l'honorable Premier ministre et concerne l'insécurité qui règne les week-ends, en particulier les dimanches sur la plage d'Albion et aux alentours.

Régulièrement il y a des bagarres entre divers groupes d'individus, agressant même des policiers qui, malheureusement, sont peu nombreux et sont souvent dépassés par les événements. Plus récemment, des individus se sont même permis de pénétrer dans l'enceinte du Club Med, agressant des agents de sécurité qui essayaient de les arrêter alors qu'ils pénétraient dans l'hôtel. Plusieurs objets ont été volés au bar de l'hôtel, et le plus grave, Madame la présidente, est le fait que ces individus sont souvent sous l'influence de la drogue, d'après l'information que j'ai reçue de ceux qui ont été témoins de ces dérapages. La passerelle de même que le ponton situé non loin du club Med sont les lieux de prédilection de ces individus qui s'y retrouvent pour consommer leur drogue. Cette situation n'a que trop duré, et je compte sur le Premier ministre pour porter une attention particulière à ce problème.

Merci.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I'll ask the Commissioner of Police to look into this matter.

MEDICAL OFFICERS - PRE-REGISTRATION EXAM

Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Madam Speaker, my issue is addressed to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life. This concerns the pre-registration exam that the Medical Officers are going to take or being called to take at the end of April. I beg the hon. Minister to consider the letter that he has got, and I am going to table a copy in this Assembly.

The issue is that those students went to a recognised medical school in this country, in Mauritius, recognised by the Medical Council, recognised by the Ministry of Health, recognised even by the Cabinet. As a Member of the Council, I know how the process went. Those qualified doctors have been examined by the SSR visiting professors.

They are examined by consultants coming from abroad, some come from India as examining consultants for those students and then they are supposed to go for an 18-month

pre-registration clinical in our hospital. There also, they are examined in each department and are followed by five consultants but, afterwards, they cannot get registration with the Medical Council. Where are we going? Mauritius has the know-how, we have recognised institutions; Cabinet has recognised institutions. How come we cannot give them registration? Why an Indian body has to come to Mauritius, as if *faire un affront* at the medical institution that gives the course when Cabinet has agreed to recognise those institutions? The consultants that we have in our hospitals certified their competence in the different departments. All have gone through, and then, all of a sudden, it is said that they have to take this Indian exam and these students do not have the syllabus.

I think the hon. Minister should really consider that this exam be cancelled because, in my opinion, we have the know-how in Mauritius; we have agreed to all those institutions. If we force these students, who are qualified doctors now, but not registered, to take an exam of an unknown syllabus, and we have experienced this in December 2013, where only two students passed that exam and there was an uproar, and the Medical Council then gave those students who failed their registration. I don't see any reason today, in year 2016, with all the experience in the medical field, with all the consultants that we have that follow those students, to come and say, 'Sorry, you are not to that level.'

Madam Speaker, we are questioning our own consultants as if they are no good, they are just giving a pass mark to those students.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, I have asked you to be brief!

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, I am nearly finished.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, you should give the chance to others also to make their case.

Dr. Sorefan: I am nearly finished, Madam Speaker. What I am saying is that the Ministry, the Government, the Cabinet should consider the case of those students, that they should not take this exam after having followed all those steps; they go to the Medical Council and they get registered, so that they can practice.

Madam Speaker, thank you.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan): Madam Speaker, I would like to briefly respond to this. When the students start on their pre-registration course, they know that after 18 months they have to sit for an exam. The Medical Council is the

regulatory authority for this kind of examination. We do not have any teaching hospital in Mauritius. We don't have any doctors or consultants who are academics, who publish articles on medicine. This is why the Medical Council decided to have recourse to the Medical Board of Examiners of India. They set an exam - not the Indian exam - on medical issues, and this has been going on for some years. I know this is a vexed issue. Unfortunately, the situation is that we have students in medicine being trained in Mauritius, Ukraine, China, India and lots of countries. So, the system of education may not be the same. In France, for example, if you want to practise medicine, you must be qualified in France. It is a closed shop - *Numerus clausus*. They do not allow anybody to come in unless you sit for their own exams. I believe this is not something that we have initiated; it was initiated in the past, and we just want to ensure that those who are going to deal with the life of patients have the minimum standards to deal with the patients. This is the reason why this exam exists.

With regard to the other issue, it has a reason. It is whether this exam should be taken *en amont* before the pre-registration starts or should it be taken after the 18 months. Now, this is the issue that is being addressed. We don't have any firm ideas on this, but the issue is that we need to be sure that those who are going to treat our patients have reached a minimum standard, and this body from India which sets the exam has been coming for a few years. They do it also for the dentists; they do it for the doctors. Until we have a proper medical school with our own teachers, with the necessary qualifications and background, I think we will still need to rely on others like India to help us in this.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

TAMARIN & BLACK RIVER - BURGLARY & LARCENY

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am going to raise an issue which concerns the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. It relates to an alarming situation in the regions of my constituency, that of Tamarin and Black River, which have been subject recently to an unprecedented series of burglary and larceny by breaking.

The victims have even gone to report the matter to the press. A number of houses, including villas and newly built residential buildings, have been visited by thieves, sometimes

even during broad daylight. The inhabitants of these regions are living in a state of fear, of tension.

Madam Speaker, I would not attempt to offer the reasons for such an escalation of burglaries in these regions. Most probably, it is linked to the proliferation of drugs in that area, but I would appeal to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to use his good offices to talk to the Commissioner of Police so that Police resources, in terms of CID members or the regular Police Force be strengthened, be beefed up, so that there are more patrols and interventions and presence of the Police in that region.

Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we are already aware of this situation. It is not only there; in many places, burglaries are becoming very common. I have discussed it with the Commissioner of Police, and the Commissioner of Police has promised me he is taking steps to see how to deal with this matter in order to, I won't say eliminate, but to minimise. Instead of this trend going on, we should try to eliminate it as much as possible.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

GRAND GAUBE/BELLIN/GOODLANDS – ROAD RESURFACING

Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My request is addressed to the RDA through the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport for the resurfacing of the main road from Grand Gaube to Bellin/Goodlands. So, if the hon. Minister can look into the matter.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): I will certainly look into the matter. I have asked the RDA and they have said that we can have it in the next budget.

Thank you.

PORT LOUIS - HAWKERS - RELOCATION

Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker. My point this afternoon pertains to the hon. Minister of Local Government, but I see he is not here. I hope the message will get through him.

Madam Speaker, last week, during Parliamentary Question No. B/106 on the subject of relocation of hawkers, I raised an additional question on the due diligence that was exercised by the Municipal Council of Port Louis in January this year in order to distinguish between seasonal and full-time hawkers, given that oftentimes, seasonal ones are privileged over the real ones.

This morning the representatives of Voice Hawkers Association and *Association Marchands Ambulants* have asked to meet me on this subject, given that there is a decision of Government for all street hawkers to vacate the streets as from 18 April of this year and to move to Decaen and Immigration sites. Their main concern is the veracity of the survey performed in October 2015 as mentioned by the hon. Minister in his reply and the Expression of Interest undertaken in January this year.

My request is for the hon. Minister of Local Government, in a spirit of transparency, consider making public as soon as possible a copy of the final list of those who would be entitled to a stall at these new sites.

This will, undeniably, allow these two associations, which I am told, are registered ones, to compare the list of the Municipal Council with their own and, in the process, clear their minds of the perception that the list contains the names of people who allegedly have been unduly favoured during the course of the two exercises performed.

Thank you

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, in the absence of my colleague, I am going to convey to him. I am sure that he is going to take into consideration what has been suggested by the hon. Member and he will come back with a statement.

MARE D'ALBERT – SWIMMING POOL – OPENING HOURS

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien): Madam Speaker, the matter that I am going to raise concerns the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports who, unfortunately, is not here.

It concerns the swimming pool of Mare d'Albert which is under the responsibility of the Mauritius Sports Council. In fact, since the last two weeks or so, the opening hours for the morning session have changed. It was initially from 05.00 a.m. to 07.00 a.m. and this has

changed to much later hours, and this, to the prejudice of a lot of civil servants and other workers who would prefer to attend the morning session before they go to work.

Representations have been made to the authorities to review the matter. Unfortunately, instead of reviewing the opening hours, the whole morning session has been cancelled.

So, I am making a humble request to the hon. Minister to please look into the matter for the benefit of the inhabitants of Mare d'Albert.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, in the absence of my colleague, I am going to convey to him. I am sure that the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports is going to take it into consideration, because they have set up a swimming pool for what purpose!

(Interruptions)

I am sure that the hon. Minister will take into consideration the suggestion which has been made.

At 7.35 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 19 April 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION – CHAIRPERSON – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/143) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Equal Opportunities Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the date of appointment of the Chairperson thereof, indicating his terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (b) the number of cases which have been heard by the Commission since November 2015 to date, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mr B.G was appointed Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission on 24 April 2012 and the terms and conditions of his appointment are as follows -

- the period of the contract is four years;
- a monthly salary of Rs130,000 plus compensation at approved rates;
- a monthly special Judicial Allowance representing 15% of salary;
- 2 months' salary as gratuity on completion of each 12 months' satisfactory service;
- a Government car of ceiling value of Rs2.5 m. plus an all-inclusive travelling allowance of Rs16,980 and a driver's allowance of Rs8,400 monthly for the employment of a personal driver;
- passage benefits in accordance with regulations in force;
- two business class return tickets to London every year during term of office;
- internet allowance at approved rates and rent free telephone plus 100 free local calls monthly, and
- annual leave of 21 working days which may be cashed at the end of the year of contract and 21 working days sick leave for each year of contract.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commission that during the period November 2015 to 06 April 2015, 60 cases have been heard by the Commission as follows -

- (i) 48 cases are under investigation;
- (ii) in 10 cases, there is no evidence of discrimination as per the Equal Opportunities Act;
- (iii) one case has been referred to Equal Opportunities Tribunal, and
- (iv) one case has been withdrawn.

STATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION – INVESTIGATION

(No. B/144) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance

and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the State Investment Corporation, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to, since 2009 to date, on a yearly basis
 - (i) the names and qualifications of each of the Chairpersons and Managing Directors who have been in post thereat, indicating in each case the pay package thereof;
 - (ii) the revenues, profits and dividends paid to Government, and
 - (iii) if the financial situation thereof has deteriorated, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given for a –
 - (i) full investigation to be carried out thereinto, and
 - (ii) review of the strategic orientation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE – LOAN – INQUIRY

(No. B/145) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the loan granted to the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade by the State Bank of Mauritius on allegedly unduly favourable terms, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police and the Bank of Mauritius respectively, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiries being carried out thereinto.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS-INDIA – DOUBLE TAXATION AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT

(No. B/146) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed review thereof.

Reply: Discussions on the India–Mauritius DTAC are still ongoing. A delegation, led by the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, is currently in India to continue the discussions.

At this stage, it would be premature for me to comment further on the discussions underway with India.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE 2015-2016

(No. B/147) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the fiscal year 2015-2016, he will state the –

- (a) recurrent public expenditure as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product;
- (b) percentage of the current expenditure allocated for –
 - (i) education;
 - (ii) health;
 - (iii) social security, and
 - (iv) public administration, and
- (c) estimated fiscal deficit.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, recurrent expenditure for fiscal year 2015/2016, as published in the Budget Estimates, is estimated at Rs93.6 billion representing 21.5% of GDP.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the percentage of recurrent expenditure allocated in the Budget Estimates to the following functions is respectively -

- For Education: 14.6%;
- For Health: 9.9%;
- For Social Protection: 28.6%, and
- For Public Administration (which is known as General Public Services under the Government Financial Statistics Manual), it is 25.7%.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the estimates for budget deficit for fiscal year 2015/2016 is Rs15.4 billion, that is, 3.5% of GDP.

DECLARATION OF ASSETS ACT – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/148) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of amendments to the Declaration of Assets Act, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: First of all, I would like to point out that the Government has, in its 2015-2019 Programme, pledged to introduce a new Declaration of Assets Act, and not amendments to the existing Declaration of Assets Act, as I already indicated in my reply to PQ B/102 on 03 March 2015.

Accordingly, my Office has already initiated action for the implementation of this measure. In fact, a Committee of officials, under the chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, has examined numerous issues pertaining to a new declaration of assets regime. The proposals made by the Committee of officials are currently being examined by a Ministerial Committee under the chairmanship of hon. Collendavelloo, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities.

The Attorney General's Office will be requested to prepare the Declaration of Assets Bill as soon as the Ministerial Committee completes its assignment.

I wish to reassure the House that Government will stand by its commitment and introduce a new Declaration of Assets Bill into the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.

TRANQUEBAR – FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND

(No. B/149) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the football playground found at Cremation Road, Tranquebar, in Port Louis, he will state the reasons why the local inhabitants do not have access thereto although the National Development Unit has completed the physical construction thereof in 2014.

Reply: In my reply to Parliamentary Question B/427 of 08 September 2015, I informed the House that the football pitch at Tranquebar is a NDU project consisting of three phases namely -

- (1) earth works, masonry walls, construction of French drains, levelling and turfing;
- (2) fencing and fixing of gates, and
- (3) lighting of football ground.

I also informed that the contract for Phase I was awarded to the contractor, Modern Jurassic Building and Construction Ltd on 07 November 2012 for the sum of Rs3,957,328 (VAT inclusive). The starting date was scheduled for 10 January 2013 with a completion date of 10 June 2013.

However, the contract was terminated on 30 July 2014 due to delays and non-performance on the part of the then contractor. As a result, the levelling and turfing of the football ground remained outstanding.

I also drew attention to the fact that on 01 August 2014, the NDU awarded a contract for Phase II of the project to Safety Construction Co. Ltd. for the sum of Rs7,095,688.60 (VAT inclusive), without including the outstanding works in Phase I, namely the levelling and turfing of the football ground. Phase II of the project started on 01 September 2014 and was completed on 27 February 2015.

A tentative handing over exercise of the site was subsequently effected on 14 April 2015 by the relevant Project Manager with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, given that the ground was not properly levelled and the turfing was not to standards, the exercise could not take place.

Consequently, the NDU on 22 October 2015 issued additional works amounting Rs1,696,526 (inclusive VAT) to Safety Construction for the levelling, supply of topsoil and grass planting at the football ground.

The commencement date for the works was fixed for 09 November 2015 and the completion date for 30 December 2015. However, this excluded the 3 months' period, normally required for the turfing to be fully grown.

I am informed by the NDU that the handing over of the project to the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been scheduled for 19 April 2016. Local inhabitants will then have access thereto.

Moreover, it is to be noted that the NDU has already initiated action for the lighting of the football ground and same is expected to be operational before December 2016.

PARLIAMENT – WOMEN REPRESENTATION

(No. B/150) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to women representation in Parliament, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of a proposed constitutional amendment to provide for any political party or alliance contesting the National Assembly Elections to present at least one female candidate in respect of each constituency, pending the finalisation of the works of the Ministerial Committee on Electoral Reforms and the reaching of a consensus in relation thereto and the adoption thereof by Parliament.

Reply: As the House is aware, the Government Programme 2015-2019 provides that our Electoral System will be reformed to introduce a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly and guarantee better women representation.

In this context, Government has set up a Ministerial Committee to make recommendations on electoral reforms. The terms of reference of the Committee does include the issue of representation of women in the National Assembly.

Since the Committee is still working, it will be premature to introduce, at this stage, any proposed constitutional amendment concerning women representation in Parliament.

FOREIGN NATIONALS – MAURITIUS PASSPORT

(No. B/151) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the foreign nationals, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, a list of those having been issued with a Mauritian passport since 2014 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) benefits derived by the country therefrom, if any.

Reply: I am informed that no Mauritius Passport has been issued to foreign nationals since January 2014 to date.

RODRIGUES – ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

(No. B/152) Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the commitment of the Government of Mauritius for the continuous supply and provision of essential commodities to its outer islands, he will state if he is aware that the inhabitants of Rodrigues are complaining about the scarcity of such commodities due to delay in supply and, if so, will he consider the advisability of increasing the frequency of the supply of commodities through the maritime route to improve the situation.

Reply: I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that it has received no complaints from the inhabitants of Rodrigues regarding the scarcity of essential commodities due to delay in supply.

Moreover, the Consumer Protection Unit in Rodrigues, which undertakes regular monitoring exercise to ensure that essential commodities are supplied smoothly in Rodrigues, has also not reported any shortage.

I am also informed that there are two vessels, namely, the Mauritius Trochetia and MV Anna which effect regular trips to Rodrigues to ensure a continuous supply of all commodities in the island.

The full cargo load for every voyage of the ships amounts to only 50 to 60% of the vessels' full capacity. Therefore, the question of increasing the frequency of supply of commodities in Rodrigues does not arise.

STADIA – FOOTBALL MATCHES – POLICE OFFICERS

(No. B/176) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the incidents that occurred during the final of the Republic Cup between the ASPL 2000 and the *Cercle de Joachim* at the King George V Stadium on Sunday 13 March 2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Football Association and from the Mauritius Professional Football League respectively, the measures that have been or that will be taken to avoid the recurrence of similar incidents in the future.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) that arrangements have been made to increase the number of police officers during matches. Full bag checks are

being effected at all stadia entries. MFA is also envisaging to set up a steward programme for the Fan clubs of all teams and an aggressive sensitisation campaign would be launched for all coaches, players, team staff and stewards.

Teams and players involved in undisciplined behaviours on and outside football pitches would be sanctioned by way of fines.

WEIGHTLIFTING - ROUMANIAN COACH - EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/177) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to weightlifting, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Amateur Weightlifters & Powerlifters Association, information as to if the Romanian Coach, Mr U. C., is currently the *Directeur Technique National* thereof and, if not, indicate the reasons therefor.

Reply: I have to inform the House that the Roumanian Coach, Mr U. C is employed as National Technical Director in weightlifting by my Ministry with effect from 10 February 2015 and he is still in post as at date.

POCHES DE PAUVRETÉ - SURVEY

(No. B/178) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the *poches de pauvreté*, he will state if his Ministry has carried out a survey for the identification thereof in mainland Mauritius, in Rodrigues and in Agalega Island respectively and, if so, will he -

- (a) table the list of the places so identified, indicating the number of families concerned therewith, and
- (b) indicate the benchmark definition of poverty that has been accepted and used by his Ministry in the course of the survey.

Reply: In April 2015, Government decided that beneficiaries of the National Empowerment Foundation should imperatively be registered and found eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius before benefitting from support under the existing Schemes. Consequently, a survey was carried out in Mauritius by the Foundation from June to December 2015.

As at 31 December 2015, 10,958 households from NEF database were surveyed and some 7,601 households have been found eligible. On the other hand, 6,816 households were already eligible under the SRM under the Child Allowance Scheme.

Consultations are presently being held with Statistics Mauritius for its support for the elaboration of a poverty map, including pockets of poverty.

Insofar as Rodrigues is concerned, as at December 2015, some 4,000 households are to be found in the database of the Foundation. The survey will be undertaken as from May 2016.

With regard to Agalega, the Outer Islands Development Corporation has informed that most of the inhabitants in Agalega are employed by the Corporation, with their monthly salaries exceeding the poverty threshold of Rs6,200.

The current poverty line adopted by Government is that the monthly income of households in Mauritius and in Rodrigues should not exceed Rs6,200 and Rs5,000 respectively.

NINE-YEAR BASIC CONTINUOUS SCHOOLING PROGRAMME - CURRICULUM & SYLLABUS

(No. B/179) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Nine Year Basic Continuous Schooling Programme, especially, regarding the first cohort of pupils who will be taking part in the Primary School Achievement Certificate Examinations in 2017, she will state if the curriculum and syllabus for each subject are ready and, if so -

- (a) table copies thereof, and
- (b) indicate -
 - (i) where matters stand as to the training of the educators therefor;
 - (ii) the number of educators being trained therefor;
 - (iii) the course contents of the training dispensed to the educators, and
 - (iv) the mode of assessment of the Primary School Achievement Certificate, indicating who will be assessing the pupils for the modular and the written assessments respectively.

Reply: My Ministry in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) has come up, after extensive consultations with stakeholders in the sector, with a revised National Curriculum Framework (NCF) - the “Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE)”. The NCF was approved by Government on 06 November 2015 and officially launched on 15 December 2015.

The teaching and learning syllabuses have subsequently been prepared by the MIE and the textbooks have been made available to schools.

In the past, detailed syllabuses for the different subjects taken at Primary level were not prepared. What did exist was the assessment syllabus for the various subjects. This was captured in the Annual Programme elaborated by the MES, which provides for the rules and regulations for the organisation and conduct of the end-of-cycle examinations.

Accordingly, the Annual Programme for Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) that contains the assessment syllabuses for the various subjects to be offered in 2017 has been published and gazetted on 5 December 2015 by way of General Notice No. 2432 of 2015. This has been circulated to the schools and is also available on the Ministry’s website.

I am tabling a copy of the Annual Programme for the PSAC Assessment 2017 as well as the copies of the teaching and learning syllabus for each subject that will be taken by the first cohort of pupils in 2017. These syllabuses are also available on the MIE’s website for consultation.

As regards part (b) -

- (i) the MIE has already initiated training programmes for Educators in the context of the implementation of the NYCBE.
Training of Educators has, in fact, been ongoing for Grades 1-5 since November 2015.
- (ii) 2,321 persons comprising Educators, Head Masters, Deputy Head Masters and Mentors have been trained. This includes 397 Educators of the current Grade 5 classes who have been trained keeping in view the specific needs of the first cohort of pupils sitting for the PSAC in 2017.
- (iii) Training sessions involved familiarisation with new materials for all subjects, innovative pedagogies, integration of ICT in the Curriculum as well as assessment and evaluation.

The contents of training dispensed to Educators also covered, *inter alia* -

- the main features of nine year schooling;
 - the New National Curriculum Framework for Grades 1-6;
 - introduction to the textbooks and teaching materials for each grade, and
 - teaching strategies in and assessment for each grade.
- (iv) The NYCBE reform provides for the introduction of the PSAC as from 2017 to gauge the progress and achievement of the children at the end of the first six years of basic education.

We are introducing a new form of assessment whereby a number of features will henceforth be evaluated in an overall manner at the end of 6 years of primary schooling -

- gains in learning outcomes,
- skills acquired, and
- the attainment of curricular objectives.

This form of evaluation is both formative and summative in nature.

The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) will be responsible for all written assessments and that includes History and Geography, and Science that will be assessed on a modular mode.

The assessment for the only non-core subject, that is, “Communication skills” will be carried out at the level of the school and will be moderated by the MES.

NINE-YEAR BASIC CONTINUOUS SCHOOLING PROGRAMME - EXPERTS & CONSULTANTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/180) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the education sector reform, especially, in regard the Nine Year Basic Continuous Schooling Programme, she will state if her Ministry has sought the assistance of foreign experts in the field in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the views and recommendations thereof.

Reply: The Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) is a major component of the Mauritian education reform agenda and it has earned a lot of positive feedback from international quarters for its rationale, philosophy, design and implementation strategies.

Eight Working Groups (WGs) have been set up at my Ministry to advance the design and implementation plans for the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education reform and the World Bank had been approached to support my Ministry in the initial and subsequent phases of this reform.

The Working Groups had met for a workshop in October 2015 and the World Bank was invited to participate therein. The objective was to have lessons from international experience built into the design of key areas of the reform program. The World Bank team, which comprised highly experienced international experts from Singapore, Korea and Ireland, thus participated in the workshop in an advisory capacity.

The experts, who came back again in March this year, assisted as well in the creation of linkages between the various areas inherent to the reform. This was to ensure a coherent overall reform program. They also assisted in the Costing and Financing as well as the Communication exercises.

Among the major recommendations made by the different Experts and Consultants were the following -

- (i) Abolishing the CPE in its present form and replacing it by an assessment that would define the level of achievement attained by each learner - a criterion-based assessment, to be organised nationally;
- (ii) The introduction of a system of continuous school-based assessment (SBA), especially for the non-core subjects ;
- (iii) The discontinuation of the Pre-Vocational Education stream;
- (iv) Increased autonomy to schools and Zones for improved learning outcomes;
- (v) The review of MIE's role and functions to reposition it to meet new and future challenges, and
- (vi) The adoption and consolidation of learner-centred inclusive approaches and methodologies at the classroom level.

The World Bank has commended the soundness of the NYCBE reform which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning.

I am pleased to inform the House that two of the teams of Experts commissioned by the European Union (EU) Delegation fully concurred with the reform strategies propounded.

Finally, allow me to inform the House that the Commonwealth Secretariat, at my Ministry's behest, is providing the services of a Senior Education Adviser over a period of two years to guide the wider process of educational reform. We will also benefit from the services of another Expert who will focus on supporting the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Curriculum Framework review.

**DRUG ABUSERS - SUBSTITUTION THERAPY - METHADONE &
SUBOXONE/NALTERXONE**

(No. B/181) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the national policy for substitution therapy for drugs abusers, he will state where matters stand as regards the -

- (a) Methadone Substitution Therapy, and
- (b) availability of Suboxone/Naltrexone as a new substitution therapy, indicating the -
 - (i) number of patients already benefitting therefrom, and
 - (ii) outcome thereof.

Reply: Presently, 42 methadone dispensing sites are operational throughout the island catering for around 4600 clients compared to 18 sites as at end of December 2014. This figure is inclusive of the methadone dispensing within the prison services.

Since the decentralisation of dispensing in January 2015, there is no overcrowding and loitering at the dispensing sites. The methadone beneficiaries are attending their respective centres for medical follow up.

The Methadone Substitution Therapy is in fact a Maintenance Therapy where the beneficiaries have been taking their doses daily for years and even for life. Very few of them have been weaned off up to now.

Government firmly believes that drug addicts should be given the opportunity to undergo detoxification thereby enabling them to reintegrate the mainstream society.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a detoxification programme using Suboxone/Naltrexone has been introduced in Mauritius since January 2016 for all newly registered opioid dependents. The injecting drug users who wish

to benefit from the treatment and detoxification programme can either directly enroll themselves at any of the methadone centres of my Ministry or can be referred by NGOs for appropriate screening.

To date, 28 patients have completed treatment. Among the 28 patients who had undergone treatment, 17 patients have consistently been drug free since discharge from hospital as evidenced by random and supervised urine drug tests.

The programme includes psychosocial support services which are being implemented in close collaboration with referral NGOs and staff of NATReSA who have been redeployed to my Ministry.

Like all detoxification programmes, there is a high risk of relapse. In this respect, a team has been put in place to continue to support those who have relapsed so that ultimately they manage to go through the detoxification successfully.

With regard to the outcome and impact of the programme, it is too early to speculate on its effectiveness without conducting a proper evaluation exercise.

In this respect, I wish to inform the House that a team from the United Nations is expected to come for an evaluation exercise in six months.

HEPATITIS C INFECTION - TREATMENT

(No. B/182) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the national policy for the Hepatitis C infection, he will state if new guidelines for patient management and treatment are being applied since new potential drugs such as Sofosbuvir and Ledipasvir have been recommended therefor.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is maintaining the existing policy on the management of patients suffering from hepatitis C. Treatment is being provided to patients who have contracted the disease through blood transfusion prior to 1997 and to healthcare staff who have contracted the disease while delivering the service.

HOSPITALS - ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT – DOCTORS POSTING

(No. B/183) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the regional hospitals, he will state the number of additional doctors that will be posted in the

respective casualty departments thereof following the introduction of the new shift system for the doctors posted thereat, indicating the new –

- (a) scheme of duties,
- (b) schedule of work, and
- (c) remuneration grid of the said doctors.

Reply: With the recent recruitment of doctors, my Ministry has implemented a shift system in the Accident and Emergency Department in the 5 Regional Hospitals on 01 April 2016. 81 doctors have been posted for the shift system as follows -

Dr. A.G. Jeetoo hospital	- 18	}	3 groups of 6
Victoria hospital	- 18		
J. Nehru hospital	- 15	}	3 groups of 5
SSRN hospital	- 15		
Flacq hospital	- 15		

The unions have requested for a long time for the introduction of the shift system. We have acceded to their request.

With regard to part (a) of the question, there is no change in respect of the scheme of duties of the doctors who will be working on shift.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry will implement a 2-tier shift system as follows -

- (i) 08.00 hours to 17.00 (day shift), and
- (ii) 17.00 hours to 08.00 hours (the following day)

With regard to part (c) of the question, the salary and allowances payable to doctors are determined by the PRB

VALLEE PITOT - BOULEVARD VICTORIA – RING ROAD ALIGNMENT

(No. B/185) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the construction of a viaduct above Boulevard Victoria in Champ de Mars and Vallée Pitot as part of the Circular Road Project and the Port Louis Ring Road Phase 2 Project, he will state when consultations with the inhabitants living in the vicinity of Boulevard Victoria will start.

Reply: In the reply to PQ B/785 last year, the House was informed that the alignment of the Ring Road comprises a viaduct above Boulevard Victoria, as proposed by J. Maynard, the Transaction Advisor appointed by the Road Development Authority for the Road Decongestion Programme. The viaduct, of an approximate length of 1.1 Km and 11 m wide, would have started at the end of Ring Road Phase 2 at Champ de Mars by means of an access ramp and would have ended near the junction of Military Road. It would have been supported on piers which would have been constructed within the existing central verge.

However, according to experts, the construction of the proposed viaduct over Boulevard Victoria at Vallée Pitot may not be feasible because it presents several critical technical, social and environmental constraints such as the need to demolish places of worship and the impossibility to build piers at the start of Boulevard Victoria.

In view of the above, a new alignment is being considered. The question of consultations with the inhabitants of the region does not arise at present. However, before the finalisation of the alignment, all stakeholders, including the inhabitants concerned, shall be invited to participate in the process in due course.

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND TRANSPORT –
ROAD TRANSPORT COORDINATOR - CONTRACT**

(No. B/186) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Mr D. R., adviser at his Ministry, he will state the –

- (a) date of appointment thereof;
- (b) duties and responsibilities thereof, and
- (c) net monthly pay and allowances that he is drawing.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, Mr Daniel Raymond is employed on contract as Road Transport Coordinator for a period of one year with effect from 23 September 2015.

As regards part (b) of the question, the main duties and responsibilities of Mr D. Raymond are as follows -

- (i) advise Government on road safety policy including the drafting of regulations, guidelines and policies, and

- (ii) assist the Government in strengthening the road safety management capacity of the Lead Agency and the capacity building of other core road safety agencies towards result focus interventions.

I am tabling his detailed duties and responsibilities as well as his Curriculum Vitae.

As regards part (c) of the question, Mr D. Raymond is drawing a net monthly salary of 3000 Euros + an all-inclusive monthly allowance of 1000 Euros for disturbance, travelling and other expenses.

Given the importance of road safety, the National Road Safety Council has been reconstituted under the Chair of the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry to advise me, *inter alia*, on the introduction of appropriate road safety measures and proper law enforcement methods. Mr Raymond who is a member of the Council plays a key role in advising on road safety policies and appropriate legislation to provide for a safe road traffic system.

In addition, I wish to inform the House that a National Road Safety Commission has been set up under the Chair of the Prime Minister to spearhead all road safety initiatives at national level. The first meeting of the National Road Safety Commission is scheduled by end of May.

LAGOON – FISHING - REGULATIONS

(No. B/187) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the prohibition of fishing in the lagoon, he will state if consideration will be given for a review of the regulations in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

WESTMINSTER FINANCIAL LTD. - INQUIRY

(No. B/188) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Westminster Financial Ltd., he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the -
 - (i) amount of money invested therein, and
 - (ii) outcome of any inquiry undertaken in relation thereto following the closure thereof, and

- (b) state if Government proposes to financially assist the victims thereof, if any.

(Withdrawn)

WORKSITES – DIGITAL FINGER PRINTS

(No. B/189) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the digital finger prints, he will state if consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be introduced to the existing legislation to allow the use thereof on sites of work in respect of the employees.

Reply: I thank the hon. Member for his question and for giving me the opportunity to clarify this issue.

I am informed by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and innovation that it is not proposed to amend legislation to compel the use of digital finger prints at sites of work.

JIN FEI, RICHE TERRE – DEAD HUNG DOG – INQUIRY

(No. B/190) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the recent reported case of cruelty on a dog which was found hanged and had sustained several bodily injuries, he will state if -

- (a) his Ministry has carried out an inquiry in relation thereto;
- (b) a post mortem investigation of the corpse has been carried out and, if so, indicate the findings thereof, and
- (c) consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be introduced to the existing legislation to provide for severer punishments for perpetrators of cruelties to animals.

Reply: I am informed that a joint site visit was effected on the same day at Jin Fei, Riche Terre by officers of the Animal Welfare Unit of the Division of Veterinary Services of my Ministry and the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare following the photograph of a dead hung dog posted on Facebook on 21 March 2016. The officers found the carcass of a male dog aged between 4 to 5 years old in putrefaction state on site.

A statement regarding the case was made at the Terre Rouge Police Station for inquiry and the carcass of the dog was sent to the Division of Veterinary Services for a post mortem investigation.

The post mortem examination was carried out on 22 March 2016, and revealed that the death of the dog was caused by suffocation. No bodily injuries were detected in view of the advanced stage of putrefaction. The police inquiry is still ongoing.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to point out that Section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act 2013 already provides for punishment against people found guilty of perpetrating cruelty to animals and contravenants to provisions made under the legislation are, upon conviction, liable to a fine not exceeding Rs15,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months. In view thereof, I am not proposing to amend the legislation.

INTEGRITY REPORTING SERVICES AGENCY – SETTING UP

(No. B/191) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Integrity Reporting Services Agency and the Integrity Reporting Board respectively, he will state where matters stand as to the setting up thereof, including the-

- (a) appointment of the Director of the Agency and of the recruitment of the staff thereof and
- (b) appointment of the Chairperson and of the two Board Members and of the recruitment of the staff thereof.

(Withdrawn)

GOODLANDS, PETIT RAFFRAY & GRAND GAUBE – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. B/192) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Northern part of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the causes of the frequent power blackouts which occur thereat, indicating the reasons why, during the blackouts which occurred thereat at about 1930 hrs on Sunday 03 April last, several failures in the restarting of power occurred and if same had put at risk electrical installations and equipment in buildings.

Reply: The records indicate that there are no frequent blackouts in the Northern part of Mauritius.

With regard to the incident in question, I am informed by the CEB that there was disruption of electricity supply on 3 April 2016 at around 19.15 hrs. after a private car hit

against a high tension pole at Rouillard, Petit Raffray. This accident affected 132 distribution transformers supplying around 8,500 customers in the regions of Rouillard, Goodlands, Petit Raffray and Grand Gaube.

CEB intervention teams acted promptly and electricity supply was restored within 50 minutes to around 8450 customers. The remaining 50 customers were reconnected around 23.00h.

I am informed that such incidents do not affect customers' appliances and equipment, which are normally designed to sustain such interruptions of supply. Only one case of material damage has been reported in the region of Daruty, Petit Raffray. This case is currently under investigation by the CEB.

MAURITIAN DOCTORS – OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT

(No. B/193) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Mauritian doctors, he will state if there have been offers for the recruitment thereof overseas and, if so, indicate the actions initiated as at to date by his Ministry in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed that following offers to recruit Mauritian doctors made by Botswana and Saudi Arabia, in late 2015, my Ministry invited doctors working in public health institutions to express their interest to work there. The following submissions have been received –

Applications from	Botswana	Saudi Arabia
General Practitioners	36	69
Specialists	5	18

We are now awaiting the relevant authorities in these two countries to carry out the selection exercise in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Training. The terms and conditions of employment of doctors overseas will also have to be finalised by all relevant parties before the Mauritian doctors proceed abroad for employment.

There is a scarcity of specialists in the public sector. Even though they are recruited to work abroad, they will not be released by my Ministry.

I wish to inform the House that employment opportunities for Mauritian doctors in French speaking African countries will also be explored due to our comparative advantage of being bilingual.

MEDICAL COUNCIL – DOCTORS - REGISTRATION

(No. B/194) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the doctors, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to the number thereof awaiting –
 - (i) recognition from their respective universities although they have already been registered with the Medical Council but not yet gazetted, indicating the reasons therefor and
 - (ii) registration with the Medical Council, indicating in each case, since when they are waiting and
- (b) state if post-internship procedures and assistance will be provided to those willing to work overseas.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the following criteria are taken into consideration by the Medical Council for the recognition of medical institutions. The criteria are as follows -

- (i) The Council consults World Directory of Medical Schools published by the WHO or the International Medical Education Directory of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER);
- (ii) The Council ascertains that the Medical Institution which has awarded the degree/diploma in medicine is recognised as such by the country where the qualifications have been obtained;
- (iii) The duration of the course and attendance of graduates;
- (iv) Duly certified full curriculum of the Medical/Dental course as well as mark sheets of applicants are scrutinised;
- (v) Pre-clinical training and clinical facilities in respect of Anatomy, Physiology, Bio-chemistry, Embryology, Pathology and Post-Mortem Training;
- (vi) Details about procedures used for clinical evaluation of students by the institution;
- (vii) Quality assurance of the course.

Upon receipt of an application at the Medical Council, the latter adopts the proposed course of action. In case the institution is already listed by the Medical Council and the latter is satisfied that all requirements are met, the application is approved within two weeks from the date of application.

In case the institution is not included in the recognised list of Medical Institutions of the Council, the Medical Council considers the application taking into consideration the criteria set for the recognition of Medical Institutions. If additional information is required, the Council contacts the relevant institutions and depending on the response, the application may take up to six months before being approved. At times, further enquiries are also carried out by the Council for clarifications, before submitting its recommendations to my Ministry.

I am informed that the Medical Council has issued a press communiqué to advise all medical students to complete their clinical training in a teaching hospital affiliated to the university where they have been enrolled.

Once my Ministry is in receipt of the recommendation of the Council for the listing and recognition of an institution, draft Regulations are vetted by the Attorney's General Office and Government's approval is sought accordingly. Upon confirmation the following week, the Regulations are gazetted for the purpose of recognition of the institutions and registration of doctors. This process may take up to six weeks.

With regard to part (a) of the question, following Government's approval on 01 April 2016, three foreign medical educational institutions are yet to be gazetted. This process is expected to be completed by the end of this week.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the Medical Council of Mauritius is currently processing the applications of 10 doctors who have applied for provisional Registration as Pre-Registration Trainees. However, as the degree awarding medical institutions are not included in the recognised list of medical institutions of the Council, additional information has been sought and the Council is awaiting for response. I am informed that the process may take around 2 months.

With regard to part (b) of the question, procedures for the recruitment and selection of doctors vary between different countries. I am informed that Botswana has proposed to recruit 36 General Practitioners and 5 Specialists from different fields from Mauritius.

These doctors would have to take an entrance examination prior to their enlistment by the Botswana Authorities. In this respect, my Ministry is working on a strategy for mutual recognition of Medical qualifications by the Medical Councils found in the SADC region.

As the House is aware, the Medical Council of Mauritius has laid down stringent measures for the registration of doctors including assessment for pre-registration House Officers. It is mandatory for medical graduates to follow 18 months of pre-registration training in various disciplines and they are assessed by the Mauritius Institute of Health during the course of their training. Furthermore, those who have applied as Pre-Registration Trainees after December 2013 have to undertake the medical registration examination conducted by the National Board of Examinations of India. Hence, we have to ensure that we develop a framework with the SADC regulators whereby countries of SADC may exchange doctors once countries are fully satisfied that they have the required qualifications and expertise.

NHDC - HOUSING UNITS - ELIGIBILITY

(No. B/195) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the National Housing Development Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the types of housing units that the Company constructs, indicating the -

- (a) eligibility criteria to benefit from the acquisition thereof in respect of each type thereof, and
- (b) reasons why the Company is claiming a deposit of up to Rs100,000 for the acquisition of a housing unit thereof in many cases.

Reply: In line with the policy of this Government to provide decent housing facilities to underprivileged households, the National Housing Development Co. Ltd has been requested to construct housing units of an approximate area of 50m² on a duplex basis and a ground plus one structure as opposed to an area of 39m² per unit constructed by the previous Government. Each housing unit of 50m² will comprise two bedrooms, a proper dining and living room, a kitchen and a separate bathroom and toilet. The housing units will be constructed on housing estates where social facilities such as, onsite leisure and recreational amenities, children's playground, green space and landscaping will be provided. These are new facilities which are being provided by this Government.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the beneficiary of a NHDC housing unit should not be owner of a house or owner of a residential plot of land and should earn a monthly family income between Rs6,200 and Rs20,000. I wish to inform the House that, formerly, only households earning less than Rs10,000 were considered for allocation of a social housing unit. This Government took cognizance that there are around 7,800

applications from families earning between Rs10,001 and Rs20,000 as at date and decided that housing facilities be extended to these families as well, the more so as most of them have applied to the NHDC since more than ten years back at a time when they were earning less than Rs10,000 a month. However, priority of consideration will be given to the more vulnerable families earning between Rs6,200 and Rs10,000 a month. The cost of a housing unit is usually around Rs1.2 million and the beneficiary will pay part of the total cost in accordance with a subsidization schedule for three different income groups, as approved by this Government. The applicants are requested to make a deposit of at least 10% of the subsidized price of a housing unit.

I wish to inform the House that, with a view to alleviating the financial burden on beneficiaries of social housing units, Government has also waived the registration fee of 5% of the selling price of a housing unit payable by each beneficiary which amounts to around Rs60,000. Furthermore, as a caring Government, our role is to ensure that repayment of monthly instalment to the NHDC does not exceed 30% of the monthly household income of the beneficiary for the subsidized purchase price of the housing unit in line with the philosophy of all lending institutions. As provided for in the Borrowers' Protection Act, before granting a credit facility to any beneficiary, the NHDC is taking all reasonable steps to verify that the beneficiary has or is likely to have the means to repay the monthly instalment.

As regards part (b) of the question, the amount of deposit to be effected depends on the household income and the age of the beneficiary. The latter should have the repayment capacity to service the mortgage debt for the purchase of the house and the monthly instalment should not exceed 30% of the household income, as I explained earlier. In addition, the age of the beneficiary will have a bearing upon the deposit to be made and the repayment period. The maximum repayment period is 30 years.

BAIN DES DAMES, CASSIS & TERRASSON - SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. B/196) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Sewerage Network System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the connection thereto of the regions of Bain des Dames, Cassis and Terrasson, and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that a feasibility study and preliminary design of regions of Bain Des Dames Sewerage Project was completed in May 2015. The project will be implemented in the financial year 2018/2019.

I am also informed that the region of Terrasson will be implemented under the Pointe Aux Sables Sewerage Project. A Pre-Feasibility Study was completed in October 2015. Given its high investment estimated at about Rs2 billion, the WMA is considering the implementation of the project in phases, subject to availability of funds.

COPYRIGHT ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/197) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard the Right Management Society, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Society, information as to the reasons why the Society was unable to organize the elections of the artists on the Board thereof, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be introduced to the existing legislation to review the provisions in relation thereto and, if so, when.

Reply: Section 43(4) (h) of the Copyright Act 2014, provides for three members to be elected to form part of the Board of the Society.

I am informed that the Society had initiated procedures for the holding of elections of the three representatives of the artists to be held on 12 July 2015.

However, prior to the election being held, an injunction was entered by a member, namely, Mr G. L., prohibiting and restraining the RMS and Ministry of Arts and Culture from proceeding with the election of the members to the Board. The Court found that there was no legal provision in the Copyright Act for the amount to be paid as fee. Hence, the election was cancelled.

As regards part (b) of the question, a High-Powered Committee chaired by a Senior Official of the State Law Office is presently reviewing the Copyright Act 2014 and will make proposals for amendments to the Act. The amendments will include, *inter alia*, provision for payment of the membership fee as well as the election procedure. A first draft of the amendments is expected by the first week of May. The draft will be examined by an expert of WIPO who will be in Mauritius from 02 to 06 May.

The draft amendments of the Copyright Act 2014 and the new Act will be proclaimed sometime in August 2016. Elections of members to sit on the RMS Board will be carried out thereafter.

ST GEORGES CEMETERY - FOOTPATH - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/198) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the project for the construction of footpaths adjacent to the wall of the St Georges Cemetery, at Les Salines, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the reasons why the works therefor have been stopped.

Reply: I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that, in fact no work has started regarding the construction of footpaths adjacent to the wall of the St Georges Cemetery.

The Public Infrastructure Committee of the Council has, as a matter of fact, at its sitting of 29 March 2016 recommended the construction of 250 metres of footpath along Marlborough Street, Cassis, subject to availability of funds. These works will therefore, be carried out as soon as necessary funds will be identified.

CONGOMAH & LES MARIANNES – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/199) Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the severe and prolonged water problems faced by the inhabitants of Congomah and Les Mariannes in Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if remedial measures have been taken in relation thereto and, if so, indicate where matters stand and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the regions of Congomah and Les Mariannes are supplied from the Salazie reservoir which receives water from Rempart dam and from Camp Thorel borehole. The reservoir has a limited capacity of only 400m³.

I am also informed that in order to improve water supply in the region -

- (i) on 27 March 2016, the Central Water Authority awarded a contract for the upgrading of the pumping and pipeline at Rempart Dam. The project is expected to be completed by February 2017, and
- (ii) it will launch bids in August 2016 for the construction of two new service reservoirs with a capacity of 3000m³ and 2000m³ respectively in Salazie and Eau Bouillie. The works are expected to be completed by December 2017.

LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL – PHARMACY SERVICES

(No. B/200) Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Hospital, he will state if he will consider the advisability of –

- (a) extending the opening hours of the pharmacy found thereat beyond 2000 hours, as was the case in the past and, if not, why not, and
- (b) reviewing the conditions thereat to allow the operation thereof as a full fledged hospital.

Reply: Long Mountain Hospital operates on a 24-hour basis but pharmacy services are provided from 8.00 hours to 20.00 hours. According to records available, the attendance during the past five years shows that an average of 175 patients attend the Long Mountain Hospital daily. However, from 20.00 hours till 06.00 hours the following day, an average of 3 patients attend the hospital. There is an ambulance service to cater for any emergency cases.

I am informed that patients attending Long Mountain Hospital after 20.00 hours and who are in need of medication are given the first doses of drugs at the Casualty department of the hospital itself. Such patients are advised to collect the required drugs the next morning at the Pharmacy of the same hospital.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that given that catchment area and the average number of patients attending regional hospitals, it is not considered feasible and cost effective at this stage to convert the Long Mountain Hospital into a full-fledged health institution. My Ministry is considering providing additional facilities such as dialysis at the hospital.