

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ORAL HERITAGE – PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION

(No. B/138) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether he will state if a repertoire of our Oral heritage has been carried out and, if so-

- (a) by whom and
- (b) the measures put in place for the preservation and promotion thereof.

**Reply:** Before replying to this question, I would like at the outset to clear one issue to avoid any confusion.

Oral heritage, is, in fact, only one component of a broader process known as “*Intangible Cultural Heritage*”. The 2003 Convention for the “*Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*”, to which Mauritius is a party, defines Intangible Cultural Heritage as the *practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.*

According to the Convention, Intangible Cultural Heritage is manifested in the following domains -

- (i) Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (ii) Performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre);
- (iii) Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (iv) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (v) Traditional craftsmanship.

In Mauritius, we have inherited substantial age-old traditions and rituals from our ancestors pertaining to the birth of the child, his first day including the giving of names, songs and other rituals in connection with marriage ceremonies, forms of original sega and other forms of communications regarding costumes and food items for particular occasions.

These constitute an invaluable treasure, which needs to be safeguarded. In this respect, a comprehensive inventory has to be carried out to identify those Intangible Cultural Heritage that are worthy of being listed on the National and World Heritage lists.

The National Heritage Fund which, operates under the aegis of my Ministry and is the national body to handle heritage issues, is presently working on a project to compile an inventory, as comprehensive as possible, of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Mauritius and Rodrigues as well.

However, pending the finalization of that inventory, I am informed that there are several other institutions closely linked to heritage issues, which are already working for the preservation and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

I am tabling a list of these institutions and their achievement in this field.

The national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage Project by the National Heritage Fund will integrate all the works carried out so far. It will also identify and capture other areas of Intangible Cultural Heritage not yet covered.

With regard to the Preservation of these works, I have to inform the House that all information collected is being preserved in the following forms – written, audio, visual and digitalized, as appropriate. Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage has already started and is an ongoing process as just mentioned earlier.

As far as promotion is concerned, same is being done through: -

- (i) Publications, seminars, conferences and survey reports;
- (ii) Documentaries and radio programmes conducted jointly with the MBC;
- (iii) Heritage information have been and is being integrated in the school curriculum of students;
- (iv) The organisation of activities in collaboration with socio cultural organizations on sirandanes and folk songs.

Once the National Inventory is completed, I intend to formulate a long-term strategy for the promotion of Intangible Cultural heritage in a structured manner.

## **NTC - FINANCIAL SITUATION**

**(No. B/139) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to its financial situation and
- (b) state if there is any plan for the privatisation thereof

*(Withdrawn)*

### **AIR MAURITIUS – CHAIRPERSON**

**(No. B/140) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to if a new Chairperson has been appointed thereat and, if so, indicate his or her terms and conditions of appointment.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MAURITIUS TELECOM – VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME**

**(No. B/141) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Telecom, information as to if it has recently implemented a Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme for its employees and if so, indicate –

- (a) the reasons therefor
- (b) the terms and proposals thereof and
- (c) the number of employees who have retired under the Scheme

*(Withdrawn)*

### **NATIONAL PAY COUNCIL – SALARY COMPENSATION**

**(No. B/142) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the determination of the salary compensation for the year 2009-2010, he will state if Government proposes to reconvene the tripartite meeting and do away with the National Pay Council.

**Reply:** The House would recall that, as announced in the Budget Speech of June 2006, the National Pay Council (NPC), which had retained the spirit of tripartism, was set up in May 2007. From then NPC has established itself and made recommendations on the quantum of salary compensation to be paid for the years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The recommendations of NPC were approved by Government and the quantum of the salary compensation payable was generally accepted by the workers.

The question of doing away with NPC and reverting to the tripartite meeting, therefore, does not arise.

### **SCHOOL CHILDREN – SCHOOL BUSES – ROAD WORTHINESS**

**(No. B/143) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to transport facilities for school children, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number of school buses deployed island wide, indicating
  - (i) their lifetime and
  - (ii) their road worthiness.

**Reply:** I am informed by the National Transport Authority that there are 378 trips which are effected in the morning and 486 in the afternoon specially for the conveyance of students. This is the dedicated school service. Besides, the other buses also convey students.

All these buses are duly licensed, they are roadworthy and they are aged less than 16 years. In fact, the median age of these buses is 6.7 years.

It must be pointed out, however, that the National Transport Corporation is, exceptionally, operating 41 dedicated buses, which are providing school services only. These buses will be allowed to operate up to the age of 18 provided they successfully undergo a strict examination to ascertain their roadworthiness.

### **WORLD FOOTBALL CUP, SOUTH AFRICA – INTERNATIONAL TEAMS – TRAINING CAMPS**

**(No. B/144) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the World Football Cup to be held in South Africa, he will state the number of international football teams which will be stopping over in Mauritius before participating therein.

**Reply:** I will reply to P. Q. Nos. B/144 and B/163 together as they refer to the same issue.

The finals of the World Cup will be held in May/June 2010 in South Africa. The preliminaries are currently ongoing within the 6 Confederations of FIFA and it is only in November 2009 that the qualified teams will be known.

It is, therefore, too early to confirm which teams will be coming to Mauritius for training camps prior to World Cup 2010.

However, I am advised by the Mauritius Football Association that teams like Argentina, Spain, Italy and Germany have expressed their wish to hold training camps in Mauritius, before proceeding to South Africa.

But, the confirmation will depend on –

- (i) the teams that qualify for World Cup 2010;
- (ii) the drawing of lots in December 2009; and
- (iii) availability of proper training grounds in Mauritius.

In this respect, it is imperative that our football pitches be upgraded to meet international standards. Thus George V, Anjalay Coopen and Auguste Vollaire stadiums have been identified to be upgraded.

I also wish to inform the House that Government has set up a Ministerial Committee to look into infrastructural and other facilities to be provided to foreign football teams willing to train in Mauritius in the context of World Cup 2010.

#### **HOLLYROOD SSS – PHASE II – IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/145) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Hollyrood State Secondary School, he will state if his Ministry is contemplating the implementation of the Phase II of the construction plan and, if so, when works are likely to start and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I would like to inform the House that in respect of Hollyrood State Secondary School (SSS), Phase II of the construction project has been completed and Phase III of the project has been completed as well. According to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI), procedures are underway in relation to Phase IV of the project, which will be completed by August 2010.

#### **RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – COMMISSIONERS - PETROL ALLOWANCES**

**(No. B/146) Mr A. Nancy (First Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, information as to -

- (a) the total amount of money paid in terms of petrol allowances by the Assembly to the Commissioners for periods -
  - (i) September 2002 to July 2006
  - (ii) August 2006 and

- (b) if the Commissioners were asked to refund the petrol allowances paid.  
(*Withdrawn*)

### **PONT PERRIER, GLEN PARK & LA DIGUE, LA VANILLE – RECONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/147) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Pont Perrier at Glen Park and La Digue at La Vanille in Constituency No. 16, Vacoas and Floréal, he will state if any project in regard thereto have been earmarked in this year's budget and, if so, when are they expected to be implemented.

**Reply:** A contract for the reconstruction of Perrier Bridge at Glen Park at the cost of Rs2.85 m. has been awarded to Best Construct Co. Ltd on 14 January 2008 and works started on 28 January 2008. The works are practically completed since January this year.

As for La Digue at La Vanille, at the request of hon. Minister Bappoo and hon. Sinatambou, Deputy Speaker, part of the handrailing has been reconstructed and soil has been carted away. However, due to regular rainfall there may be further accumulation of soil. It is contemplated to do further cleaning works by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix in collaboration with the Living Environment Unit of my Ministry.

### **AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – BUSINESS OPERATING PLAN**

(No. B/148) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the rescue plan to bail out the Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to if a redundancy plan has been approved by the Board and is being implemented and, if so, indicate if foreign officers, namely pilots and other technical staff, are being made redundant to cut costs.

**Reply:** I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd., that following the implementation of a revised operating pattern and business operating plan, the Company is addressing its staffing issues in the following manner:

- (a) granting of Leave Without Pay and introduction of part-time work in specific cases to both local and expatriate pilots;
- (b) renewal of contract of expatriate pilots on new terms and conditions;
- (c) non-renewal of the contract of a few expatriate pilots; and
- (d) termination of contract of some expatriate pilots.

As of today, there is no redundancy plan for the Mauritian employees of the company.

### **ROCHE BOIS - FISH LANDING STATION**

**(No. B/149) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the fish landing station at Roche Bois, he will state if the development in the port is having any incidence thereon and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

**Reply:** I am advised by the Mauritius Ports Authority that the development project in the port will have no impact on the activities of the fishermen and the operation of the Roche Bois Fish Landing Station.

### **LES SALINES, PORT LOUIS - FISH HAWKING PLACE**

**(No. B/150) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the proposed project for a fish hawking place at Les Salines, Port Louis, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **STATE TRADING CORPORATION - DOUBLE-HULK VESSEL**

**(No. B/151) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the proposed purchase of a double-hulk vessel by the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **SURINAM/CHEMIN GRENIER – BUS SERVICE**

**(No. B/152) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of a petition, dated 15 December 2008, from the inhabitants of Rivière des Galets, Surinam, and of Chemin Grenier, complaining of bus transport facilities along the coastal area from Surinam to Rivière des Galets for being irregular

and causing prejudice to the inhabitants of the region and, if so, the remedial measures his Ministry proposes to take.

**Reply:** I have received a copy of a petition dated 15 December 2008 from the Mouvement Civique de Chemin Grenier which I referred to the National Transport Authority on 27 January 2009 for investigation and report.

The National Transport Authority investigated into the representations made and found out that –

- (i) the National Transport Corporation provides a regular bus service on route 6 (Curepipe-Rivière des Galets), route 8 (Souillac-Baie du Cap), route 133 (Curepipe-Choisy) and route 197 (Port Louis-Rivière des Galets), along the main road which passes through the localities of Surinam, Chemin Grenier including Chamouny at an average frequency of 15 minutes during peak and 25 minutes during off peak hours;
- (ii) the National Transport Corporation also provides a bus service at specific times between Curepipe and Pointe aux Roches.

I am also informed that the National Transport Corporation is not eager to provide a new service between Rivière des Galets and Surinam along the coastal road arguing that the demand is too low and also because the inhabitants can easily catch regular bus services along the main road which is 1 km away from the coastal villages.

The situation will be closely monitored and adjustments will be made if so required.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - SENSITISATION PROGRAMME**

(No. B/153) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the sensitisation programme for the alleviation of domestic violence, she will state –

- (a) how it is being implemented;
- (b) the targeted audience; and
- (c) the resource persons available

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that besides conducting monthly sensitisation programmes, through talks/workshops across the island and through radio programmes, my Ministry has published a series of Information, Education and Communication materials in terms of pamphlets/booklets which have been disseminated among the public at large.

The collaboration of the Mauritius College of the Air has also been sought for the mounting of short films to sensitise the population on our services and strategies adopted to combat domestic violence.

Moreover, with the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence 2007, which necessitates the need to sensitise and change attitudes to combat domestic violence, my Ministry has enlisted the collaboration of the Council of Religions. In this connection, a workshop was organised on 25 November 2008 with a view to taking on board the various religious organisations on the issue of domestic violence.

Religious bodies being influential groups, can pave the way to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

In December 2007, my Ministry launched an anti-violence campaign '2008: L'Année Sans Violence' and with the collaboration of our stakeholders we conducted a series of awareness campaigns on issues related to domestic violence.

With a view to strengthening our network, my Ministry has also sought the collaboration of the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizen Welfare & Reform Institutions and the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit at a workshop organised on 2 April 2009. The objectives were to organise wider awareness programmes amongst the community on our services and on issues related to domestic violence. Through this partnership, officers working in Municipalities, District Councils, Community Centres, Social Welfare Centres and Citizen's Advice Bureaux have been requested to organise awareness programmes at community level so as to reach a wider segment of our population. A calendar of activities has been worked out by officers to sustain the campaigns and same will be implemented once they have obtained approval from their respective organizations.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the targeted audience for our sensitisation campaigns are women, men, youth and children, the elderly, stakeholders working towards the elimination of domestic violence, and they include NGOs and civil society organisations.

As regards part (c) of the question, the Resource Persons are mainly from –

- my Ministry itself, that is, Family Counselling Officers, Family Welfare & Protection Officers, Psychologists and Legal Resource Persons; and
- other Governmental bodies and NGOs having expertise on issues related to domestic violence.

## HOTELS - CANVASSERS – PERMIT

(No. B/154) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communication whether, in regard to the canvassers, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof who have been granted permits, region-wise and
- (b) if complaints have been registered in relation to acts of malpractices carried out by these people.

**Reply:** Following various representations and complaints received against persons who were involved in canvassing activities in front of hotels, provision was made in Tourism Authority Act 2006, as subsequently amended in 2008, for the issue of a canvasser permit in order to regulate and control the activities of canvassers.

However, in order to ensure that the activities of the canvassers do not tarnish our image as an up-market quality tourist destination, the Tourism Authority decided, in the first instance, not to issue canvasser permit but only provisional attestations, on a pilot basis, to eligible applicants with a view to determining what best arrangements could be put in place and conditions imposed, so that canvassers who are issued with a permit do not unduly harass tourists.

I am informed that, accordingly, 25 provisional attestations were issued as follows

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- Black River - 18
- Pamplémousses - 5
- Rivière du Rempart - 2
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These provisional attestations which are of a duration of 3 months were first delivered in May 2007. On expiry of these attestations in July 2007, some were, thereafter, renewed till January 2008. No new application has since been entertained by the Tourism Authority.

In light of the experience gained and feedback received, my Ministry is now working on a new policy with regard to the activities of canvassers.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that concerning persons duly licensed, only one complaint has been registered at the Tourism Authority. However, the Authority has registered 21 complaints against persons who are carrying out canvassing

activities illegally. All these complaints have been forwarded to the Commissioner of Police and Police du Tourisme for investigation. Investigation is ongoing.

#### **NHDC UNITS – SEIZURE**

**(No. B/155) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the NHDC units, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the number thereof which has been seized by the Company, since July 2007 to date, island wide.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **DIVORCED MOTHERS (LESS THAN RS10,000 MONTHLY) – ASSISTANCE**

**(No. B/156) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)** asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the divorced mothers earning less than Rs 10,000 monthly and not in receipt of any alimony from the ex-spouse, following a court order when the divorce was pronounced, she will state if her Ministry proposes to take any measures to come to their assistance.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizen Welfare & Reforms Institutions that divorced mothers may be granted social assistance under the Social Aid Act provided that they have insufficient means to provide for themselves and their dependent children. Moreover, to encourage female-headed single parent households to take up employment in the formal sector, Government also provides a special allowance of Rs 700 per dependent child (aged between 3 months and 5 years), in addition to the social aid to such households, provided that total income from employment and the social aid does not exceed Rs 7,500 per month.

Failure to pay alimony is an offence. Under Criminal Code Section 261 (1) – any person who, having been judicially ordered to pay alimony to his spouse or children, voluntarily fails, during two months to pay the full amount of alimony so ordered to his spouse or children, shall commit an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs 5000 and to imprisonment not exceeding one year. I have been informed that for the period January – December 2008, 138 cases of failure to pay alimony were reported to the Police Department.

Divorced mothers not in receipt of alimony from ex-spouse following a court order are provided free legal advice and counseling at the six Family Support Bureaux of my Ministry on procedures to be followed to seek redress under such circumstances. Family Counselling Officers and Psychologists of my Ministry also convene both divorcees for mediation at the Family Support Bureaux to attempt a peaceful settlement to the problem of failure to pay alimony.

## **RODRIGUES - OPTIC CABLE**

**(No. B/157) Mr J. Von Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the connection of Rodrigues to an optic cable like EASE or Seganet, he will state where matters stand.

**Reply:** I wish to refer the hon. Member to reply made to P. Q. No. B/1332 on 25 November 2008.

As matters stand today, there are a number of optical fibre submarine cables initiatives in the sub-Saharan African Regions as well as in the Indian Ocean, among others the EASSY which is a NEPAD initiative while the SEGANET, that of the Indian Ocean Commission.

On 16 December 2008, the Government of Mauritius became a party to the IOC initiative when I, along with other Ministers of the IOC Member States signed a protocol in Madagascar pertaining to the implementation of this project.

The main objective of the Protocol is to facilitate and or commit the parties to the construction and operation of the SEGANET on open access principles. It further provides for the setting up of a special purpose entity for carrying out the construction, ownership and operation of the proposed Regional Network.

As per the provisions of the Protocol, once the various mechanisms would be in place and investment secured, the project will be implemented which will benefit both Mauritius and Rodrigues. At this stage, I wish to assure the hon. Member that connectivity with the SEGANET optical fibre submarine cable would be extended to Rodrigues, as well.

## **MOUNT ORY/MOTORWAY M1 – ROAD PROJECT**

**(No. B/158) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the road project elaborated in 2004 to link Mount Ory to Motorway M1, he will state if the project is still on the Government infrastructure programme and, if so, if it will be implemented, indicating when.

**Reply:** The construction of a grade separated junction at Mount Ory was initiated as far back as 1998. However, its implementation has been postponed in view of the fact that the Motorway M1 is already acutely congested and it would be difficult to inject

additional traffic into the northbound carriageway without causing an accumulation of traffic within the village of Mount Ory itself, with all the inconvenience it will cause.

Government is in the process of implementing a number of projects to alleviate the congestion on the Motorway such as Terre Rouge-Verdun-Ebène Link Road, the Port Louis Ring Road, the Harbour Bridge and the Bus lane on M1 as well as the Busway. I am pleased to inform the hon. Member that tender for the widening of Motorway M1 to provide a bus lane between Pailles and Caudan has already been launched and works are due to start around June this year. This project is expected to alleviate the traffic congestion on that road.

I wish to add that the Road Development Authority had invited bids for the construction of a footbridge in November 2008 for the safe crossing of pedestrians near Coleville Deverell Bridge. Unfortunately, at the closing date for submission no bids were received. The project is now being lumped with a second footbridge on the motorway near Food Canners and bids are expected to be invited for implementation during the coming financial year.

#### **SUGAR SECTOR - VRS PACKAGE – LAND ALLOCATION**

**(No. B/159) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the ex-employees of the sugar sector who have benefitted from the first Voluntary Retirement Scheme package, he will state the number thereof who have received the title deed of the plot of land allocated to each of them.

**Reply:** The implementation of VRS I started in December 2001 and the total number of workers who voluntarily terminated their contract of employment was 8,207. Some 70 sites over a total extent of 806 arpents of land were earmarked for allocation to the beneficiaries.

As at date, 7,558 title deeds have been handed over to the beneficiaries for 66 sites. More than 90 percent of these deeds were remitted during the period 2006 to 2008.

The four remaining sites are Beau Champ (Bel Ombre), Trois Boutiques, St Aubin and Union. The situation is as follows –

- (i) For Beau Champ, the drawing of lots were effected on 6 November 2008. 132 title deeds are under preparation at the Notary's office.
- (ii) Infrastructure works on site at Trois Boutiques have been completed. The drawing of lots exercise has been effected and Morcellement Permit will be issued once CWA clearance is obtained. Title deeds will be prepared thereafter.

- (iii) Infrastructure works on the site at St. Aubin have been completed except for some outstanding works with respect to CWA offsite piping works. Once, CWA clearance is obtained, the Morcellement Permit will be issued and the preparation of title deeds will be undertaken.
- (iv) Regarding Union, a new site has been identified because the workers have not accepted an initial site which has already been developed. The Morcellement Board has issued the Letter of intent to Union Sugar Estate in November 2008. Infrastructure works will start in May 2009. As per the Letter of Intent, these works should be completed within 15 months as per the provisions of the S.I.E. Act 2007.

### **MAURITIUS SUGAR PLANTERS ASSOCIATION /GOVERNMENT DEAL – LAND ACREAGE**

**(No. B/160) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the hon. Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the deal that was signed in December 2007 with the Mauritius Sugar Planters Association, he will state the acreage of land -

- (a) obtained by Government, as at to date, indicating their location and
- (b) the acreage that has so far been allocated to the small planters.

**Reply:** I indicated in my reply to P. Q. No. B/1222 last year that the deal concluded between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association in December 2007 *inter alia* provides for the grant of 2,000 arpents of land for social housing projects and agricultural diversification. The share allocated for food security through agricultural diversification is 1,000 arpents.

My Ministry has since last year, worked out the land requirements for agricultural diversification based on projects submitted in the context of the Food Security Strategic Action Plan. A first demand for 267 arpents was made to the Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service. The request has, in principle, been approved and the plots of land already identified and assessed for their agricultural suitability with respect to crop and livestock activities. These are located at Belle Vue Rouge Terre, La Chaumière, Deep River Beau Champ, Mon Désert Alma, FUEL, La Rosa and Riche en Eau.

I would like to mention that the agricultural projects to be implemented on the 1,000 arpents of land should be in line with the objectives set in the Food Security Strategic Plan launched by my Ministry in January 2009. The lands will be allocated to farmers associations or groups who would undertake agricultural production that would enhance our food sufficiency and security. A Project Implementation Unit established to monitor the implementation of Strategic Plan is working out the land requirements for different projects submitted. My Ministry is in the presence of applications for land from various agricultural operators covering more than 2,000 arpents for projects related to

production of food crop, maize, fodder, pig breeding, dairy farms and women empowerment.

### **PUBLIC DEBTS – BREAKDOWN**

**(No. B/161) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether he will state –

- (a) the level of total public debts, including domestic and foreign debts of *para statals* as at to date in absolute terms, and
- (b) the breakdown of total public sector debts.

**Reply:** Government debt amounted to Rs 120,557 million and parastatal debt stood at Rs 21,067 million .As a result the level of total public debt, which is the sum of Central Government debt and parastatal debt totaled Rs 141,524 million as at 31 Dec 2008.

Of these debts, Rs 120,345 million were financed domestically and the remaining Rs 21,179 million financed from external sources.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, debt figures in absolute terms do not capture the evolution of debt sustainability which is the measure that really matters. It is for this reason that all countries in the world and all international institutions always and invariably measure debt as a proportion of GDP. The same principle applies for the budget deficit. It is always computed as a proportion of GDP.

And these ratios show clear improvements of debt sustainability since 2005. For example, as a ratio of GDP total public sector debt has been reduced from 68.8% in 2005/06 to 57% for 2007/08 and to 53.6% at December 2008. The OECD benchmark is 60%, which means that we have brought the public sector debt ratio from above the benchmark in 2005 to below the benchmark today, which is a marked improvement in debt sustainability.

Similarly, we have improved, considerably the sustainability of central government debt by bringing it down from 55.7% of GDP in 2005/06 to 49% in 2007/08 and to 45.6% at end December 2008.

It should be pointed out that the absolute level of debt grew by around Rs 10 b per year between 2000 and 2005. However the average increase since July 2005 has been around Rs 4 b per annum.

## **SPORTS COMPLEXES – FACILITIES**

**(No. B/162) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the facilities of the sports complexes which are being made available to the public, he will state the rates applied therefore.

**Reply:** The Ministry of Youth and Sports owns around 50 sports complexes which, amongst others, include football playgrounds, swimming pools, gymnasiums and tennis courts.

These sports complexes are made available to the public, Sports Federations, local Authorities, schools, hotels and private firms and other clubs at different rates (or freely of cost) depending on the user, the time allocated and the sports infrastructure.

The information relating to the rates applied to the public is being tabled.

## **WORLD CUP 2010 - FOOTBALL GROUNDS – TRAINING CAMP FACILITIES**

**(No. B/163) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the World Cup 2010 to be held in South Africa, he will state if some local football grounds are being upgraded to provide training camp facilities to the international teams which are participating therein.

*(Vide reply to P. Q. No. B/144)*

## **GANESH MANDIR, QUARTIER MILITAIRE – DRAINS & PAVEMENTS**

**(No. B/164) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the problems in relation to the drains at the Shivala, known as Ganesh Mandir, at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, and if so, will he state –

- (a) the remedial measures he proposes to take and
- (b) if he will consider constructing pavements threat where necessary.

**Reply:** I have been informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the accumulation of water near the Ganesh Mandir at L'Espérance, Quartier Militaire is due to the poor gradient and deposit of silt.

Subject to wayleave being obtained from the owners, the Moka/Flacq District Council would establish a new alignment and construct a new drain along the existing access up to the nearby rivulet.

With respect to part (b) of the question, the Road Development Authority will consider the provision of footpath and drains along the main road during the financial year 2010.

#### **IVTB CENTRE, NICOLAY ROAD – STUDENTS – LIST**

**(No. B/165) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether, in regard to each of the courses run by the Industrial and Vocational Training Board Centre at Nicolay Road, since its implementation to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to a list of the students enrolled, indicating their respective addresses.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **FERRARI ROAD, SAINT PIERRE - ROAD REPAIRS**

**(No. B/166) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the Ferrari Road at Circonstance, Saint Pierre, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **PLAINE VERTE GARDEN - UPGRADING**

**(No. B/167) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Plaine Verte Garden, from the Paul & Virginie Street to the Diego Garcia Street, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if consideration will be given for -

- (a) an increase in the number of
  - (i) lighting points;
  - (ii) benches;
  - (iii) dustbins;
  - (iv) entrances and
- (b) the upgrading of the pond found in the centre of the garden, in view of the increasing number of visitors thereat at night.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **ROSAN AND CORINGA STREETS, CITÉ MARTIAL - DRAINS**

**(No. B/168) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a 165 - metres drain along the Rosan and Coringa Streets, Cité Martial, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

## **SUGAR SECTOR - VRS II –BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/169) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme II, he will state –

- (a) the number of beneficiaries thereof;
- (b) the amount of money disbursed in terms of compensation and
- (c) if plots of land have been earmarked.

**Reply:** With regard to part to (a) of the question, 6,627 workers have benefited from the Voluntary Retirement Scheme II.

With regard to part (b), Rs3.1 billion have been paid as compensation to these workers.

With regard to part (c), 63 sites covering a total area of around 650 arpents have been identified and agreed upon by the employers and the workers for eventual allocation as land compensation.

## **FOOD ITEMS - DUTIES**

**(No. B/170) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter whether, in regard to the food items on which duties, customs tariffs and Value Added Tax have been removed, he will state the number and type thereof.

**Reply: (The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment):** I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that out of 733 customs tariff lines for food items, excluding alcoholic beverages, 95% i.e. 700 tariff lines for food do not attract customs duty. Furthermore, 62 %, i.e. 452 out of the 733 tariff lines for food items are not subject to Value Added Tax.

As regards, the types of food items that are not subject to Customs duty or VAT, the list is being tabled. However, a full list by tariff lines in respect of food items is available on the website of the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

### **PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – HEDGING CHARGES**

**(No. B/171) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to petroleum products, he will state the hedging charges paid by customers for every litre thereof purchased since the last Automatic Pricing Mechanism exercise.

**Reply :** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ No. B/29 where it was mentioned that a hedging provision of Rs3.00 per litre in the price structures of both Mogas and Gas Oil has been included since 01 November 2008. Furthermore, I have been informed by the State Trading Corporation that there was no gain or loss for March and April APM exercises.