

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MBC – PEPSI HUNGAMA PROGRAMME – EXPENSES

(No. B/265) **Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the expenses incurred in connection with the Pepsi Hungama programme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if –

- (a) the Chairperson of the Board thereof has refused to sign cheques pertaining thereto and, if so, the reasons therefore, and
- (b) any amount of money has been taken from the Welfare Fund to pay therefor.

(Withdrawn)

OLD GRAND PORT ROAD, QUARTIER MILITAIRE –DRAINS

(No. B/305) **Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the frequent flooding of the area at the Old Grand Port Road, Quartier Militaire, and if so, will he state when works will start in respect of the project for the construction of drains thereat, indicating the project value thereof.

Reply: The road under reference is not classified and does not, therefore, fall under the purview of the Road Development Authority.

I am informed by the National Development Unit that following the flash flood of 26 March 2008, the project to construct a drain at Old Grand Port Road in Quartier Militaire (near Quartier Militaire College) has been included in its Emergency Rehabilitation Programme.

Lux Consult (Mtius) Ltd is presently carrying out a survey and is expected to come up with potential solutions to address the flooding problem in the region. The proposals of the consultant are still awaited

RIVERSIDE LANE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - TARRING

(No. B/306) Dr. P. Ramloll (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Riverside Lane, opposite the Labourdonnais Street, at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, he will state if urgent consideration will be given for the tarring thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the first 50 metres of Riverside Lane opposite Labourdonnais Street at L'Espérance, Quartier Militaire is a public road and already tarred.

I am also informed that the next 200 metres of the lane is water bound and is still a private access. Consequently the Council will not be in a position to undertake the tarring of this stretch of the road.

SRI LANKA – TAMIL POPULATION - PLIGHT

(No. B/307) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the plight of the civilians of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka, he will state if Government has raised concerns thereon and, if so, indicate the various human rights and international organisations to which these concerns were expressed.

Reply: The situation in Sri Lanka has so far not been on the formal agenda of the Human Rights Council and the UN Security Council – the appropriate International fora to address the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

The matter was raised during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sri Lanka held on 13 May 2008. Mauritius, along with other members of the Human Rights Council adopted the report on the UPR of Sri Lanka which contains, *inter alia*, recommendations to address the situation of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Mauritius is concerned with the plight of civilians, their security and the deep humanitarian crisis unfolding in the country.

We welcome the humanitarian pause announced by the Government to allow the civilians to leave the conflict areas on 13-15 April. We believe that this cessation of hostilities should be extended to allow trapped civilians to leave for secure areas.

We appeal on all parties to ensure that those wishing to leave the conflict areas be allowed to do so and take steps to save civilian lives. We also condemn any attempt to use civilians as human shields.

PUBLIC OFFICERS – PRB REPORT – RETIREMENT PENSION

(No. B/308) Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the retirement pension of public officers, he will state the reasons as to why the conversion point chosen for the alignment thereof with the PRB Report 2008 is not based on the actual pension drawn, but rather, on a lower sum, thus resulting in lower pension retirement benefits to which the retirees would have otherwise been entitled.

Reply: I am informed that the conversion point chosen for the alignment of the retirement pension of public officers is based on a point-to-point conversion of the salary of the pensioner at the time of his retirement and not on a lower sum as claimed.

I am further informed that such was not the case before 1987 when the pensions of retired officers were not adjusted in the wake of salary reviews. Pensioners were compensated periodically for an increase in the cost of living. However, the salaries commissioner, Mr D. Chessworth in his Report of 1988 recommended that pensions of retired officers be computed on the basis of the revised pensionable emoluments of the relevant grades as from the date of implementation of new salaries.

In its 2008 Report, the PRB again recommended that, as in the past, pensions of retired public officers should continue to be recomputed on the basis of the revised pensionable emoluments as from 1st July 2008.

I am also advised that on this issue, a representation was made by Pensioners and the matter was considered by the PRB in the wake of its 2008 exercise for the review of salaries and conditions of service.

In this context, the recommendation made at paragraph 20.10 of the PRB Report 2008 is very clear.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS – LINGUISTIC & CULTURAL RIGHTS

(No. B/309) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the primary and secondary schools students, he will state if Government is contemplating implementing measures to ensure that equal opportunities be provided to all of them, on the basis of linguistic and cultural rights.

(Withdrawn)

GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY - OPERATION

(No. B/310) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Global Positioning System Technology, he will state if it is currently being used and, if so, since when and, if not, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG HOSPITAL – METHADONE THERAPY UNIT

(No. B/311) Mr Y.Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a Desintoxication/Rehabilitation Centre at the Mahebourg Hospital, he will state if he has received any request for its setting up from the “*Groupe Renaissance De Mahebourg*” and, if so, where matters stand.

Reply: The Methadone Substitution Therapy was introduced by my Ministry as a priority measure of harm reduction strategies to combat HIV and AIDS among Injecting Drug Users. The programme started in November 2006 at the National Methadone Substitution Therapy Centre in Beau Bassin and the policy of my Ministry is to decentralize the service so as to make it accessible to more clients. So far, 1284 clients have been induced.

At a meeting of the National AIDS Committee chaired by the Honourable Prime Minister on 8 April, 2009 which was attended by Dr Catherine Gaud, “Médecin Chef de Service de l’Unité D’Immunologie Clinique” of Reunion Island, as well as representatives of NGOs, amongst others, it was decided to set up regional Methadone Substitution Therapy Centres to target a larger number of drug users.

I have to confirm that a group of persons from the “Groupe Renaissance De Mahebourg” came to see me on 9 April, 2009 and the problem of drug addiction in Mahebourg was raised. I informed them about the policy of decentralization of my Ministry and of the proposal to set up a Methadone Substitution Therapy Unit in the region of Mahebourg.

I also informed the representatives of the “Groupe Renaissance De Mahebourg” about the various steps involved for clients to be put on Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme, particularly regarding the preparation and the psycho-social support of the clients by a NGO, prior to and after the induction phase.

Taking into consideration the various steps required for the opening of a Methadone Therapy Unit, it is expected that the programme may be operational in Mahebourg in some six weeks’ time.

MAHEBOURG/QUEEN ELIZABETH COLLEGE- SCHOOL BUS ROUTE

(No. B/312) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the request made for a direct school bus route from Mahebourg to the Queen Elizabeth College and back, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if same has been turned down and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

NTC - SALARIES AND WAGES

(No. B/313) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the losses incurred by the National Transport Corporation for the period 2007-2008, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if the increases in the salaries and the wages, as a result of the implementation of the recommendations of the National Remuneration Board and of the Pay Research Bureau, account therefor.

(Withdrawn)

NTC – BUSES - PURCHASE

(No. B/314) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the buses of the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the -

- (a) number thereof purchased yearly, since 2003 to date
- (b) maintenance cost thereof
 - (i) for each of the years 2005 to 2008, indicating in each case the amount of money spent on tyre replacement and
 - (ii) since 2008 to date and
 - (iii) the amount earmarked therefor for 2009 and
- (c) number of engine replacement effected on buses purchased in 2007.

(Withdrawn)

**SUGAR INDUSTRY REFORM - EUROPEAN UNION -
ACCOMPANYING MEASURES**

(No. B/315) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the accompanying measures granted by the European Union for the reform of the sugar industry, he will state the amount of money disbursed -

- (a) since 2005 to date, specifying the amount dedicated for budgetary support and
- (b) presently being spent for the projects being implemented.

Reply: (The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development): As the House is aware, under the EC Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries (AMSP) (2006-2013), Mauritius is entitled to 19.4% of the global envelope of €1.284 billion being made available to the 18 ACP Sugar Protocol countries. This represents roughly an outright grant of € 250 million to which Mauritius may be eligible, provided it fulfills all the performance indicators to be agreed in future consultations with the EU.

As regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that to-date a total amount of € 39.8 M has been disbursed by the E.U under Accompanying Measures for the Sugar sector Reform in Mauritius. In Financial Year 2006/07, a first amount of € 6.5 million was disbursed, followed by €33.3 M in Financial Year 2007/08.

The financial resources under the Sugar Accompanying Measures are in form of General Budget Support for the implementation of the economic reform programme of Government, which includes the sugar sector reform but need not be restricted to spending in the sugar sector only.

With respect to part (b) of the question, the amount of money presently being disbursed are -

Disbursement under Sugar accompanying measure from the government budget

1. Disbursement to the Sugar Reform Trust (SRT) for payment of VRS2, ERS and Blue Print to agricultural and factory workers of the sugar Industry

To enable the implementation of the scheme in favour of employees concerned by the VRS 2, the ERS and the Blue Print, a Sugar Reform Trust was set up. The Trust is entitled to raise a government guaranteed loan of up to 94M€ and so far it has raised 77.1M€ as loans to meet social costs already incurred. All this amount has accrued to employees. The interest on this loan is refundable by concerned Sugar Companies including Rose Belle, the SIT and the SLDC. In 2007/8, an amount of 36M€ was disbursed by Government to the SRT to enable it to service its debt.

In all, 7,349 workers and employees have been able to voluntarily terminate their contract of employment and obtained their compensation as determined under the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act.

2. Field Operations and Irrigation Projects (FORIP)

Under Sugar Accompanying Measures, funds have also been disbursed from the Government Budget to finance free de-rocking of small planters lands and irrigation projects, all implemented by the Mauritius Sugar Authority. Total amount disbursed to-date stands at Rs 609 M, equivalent to €14.8 M, broken down as follows -

For FY 2006-2007 : Rs 309 M

For FY 2007-2008 : Rs 185 M

For FY 2008-2009 : Rs 115 M

Total area of land de-rocked in various parts of the island amount to 2,394 hectare belonging 2,179 small planters. The 2,394 ha are expected to produce an additional 145,000 tonnes of cane annually and in a sustainable manner for a period of 7 years. This is equivalent to 16,000 tons of sugar, which at Rs17,500 per ton represents a revenue of Rs277 m.

3. Equity Participation of Planters /Sugar Industry workers in the investment in the sugar industry

As Members of the House are aware, the Government has been able to obtain 35 percent participation of planters and sugar industry workers in the share capital of the sugar industry as part of the global deal with the MSPA.

In budget FY2007-2008 Government has disbursed Rs 94.5M (€2.2 M) as equity participation of planters and workers in a new sugar refinery.

The overall EU disbursements to Government of Mauritius as general budget support stands at €39.8M whereas disbursements from the budget for the sugar reform stands at €53 M. The beneficiaries are exclusively sugar industry workers and employees, and the non corporate planters, especially the small ones.

NTA - SUPPORT FUND

(No. B/316) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Support Fund created for bus transport companies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to -

- (a) the amount of money earmarked and
- (b) the beneficiaries thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the National Transport Authority that no support fund has been created when increase of 28% in bus fares was worked out to come into effect on 12 May 2008. It was agreed that the National Transport Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development would work out a formula to make up for a shortfall of Rs192 m. from the proceeds of the BCRA itself. The then beneficiaries are the National Transport Corporation, United Bus Service and Triolet Bus Service.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE - SPRAYMEN – POSTS

(No. B/317) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the posts of Spraymen in his Ministry, he will state if they have been filled in the current present financial year and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when;
- (b) the number thereof and
- (c) the criteria laid down and used for the selection.

Reply: The reply is in the affirmative. Concerning parts (a) & (b) of the question, 54 vacancies have been filled during this financial year, 19 in July 2008 and 35 in April 2009.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the criteria for selection are for selection are as specified in the Schedule of Duties. These include, *inter alia*, I quote -

- (a) Candidates should be holder of the Primary School Leaving Certificate/ Certificate of Primary Education or an alternative qualification acceptable to the Public Service Commission
- (b) They should be of a strong physique and a sound health
- (c) Those who have previous experience in insecticide spraying work, though not holding the qualifications at (a) above, may be considered for appointment as Insecticide Sprayermen.

MATERNAL DEATHS - NUMBER

(No. B/318) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to women who have passed away, following delivery or related complications, he will state the number thereof, since January 2006 to date.

Reply: I am informed that the number of women who have passed away in public hospitals following delivery or related complications from January 2006 to date is as follows -

Year 2006	:	6 cases
Year 2007	:	8 cases
Year 2008	:	6 cases
Year 2009	:	3 cases

(Jan to April)

The leading causes of maternal deaths are postpartum haemorrhage followed by eclampsia.

Presently, maternal deaths in the private sector are reported to the Civil Status Office through the Death Certificate. My Ministry intends to monitor closely the situation in the private sector too.

I wish to assure the House that all cases of maternal deaths are fully investigated by a Technical Team of my Ministry comprising the Director Health Services responsible for hospitals services, the Regional Health Director and a Consultant in the field.

It is most unfortunate that women lose their lives while giving birth. Indeed one maternal death is too many. I view this situation with serious concern. In this connection, in January this year, a High Level Technical Committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Director General Health Services. The objectives of the Committee were to look into the causes of maternal deaths and to propose remedial actions with a view to curbing down the present trend.

This Committee has submitted its recommendations which include *inter alia* the following-

- The establishment of a protocol for referral of antenatal cases from AHC to tertiary centres.
- A planned delivery for all high-risk patients, that is, pregnancy induced hypertension, diabetes, placenta praevia.
- A coordinated multidisciplinary approach to all complicated cases.
- Regular and updated training on the signs and symptoms of critical illness from both obstetrics and non-obstetrics cases to all health professionals.

Appropriate action is being taken for the implementation of these recommendations.

Furthermore, Government has set up a Ministerial Committee to look into cases of maternal deaths as well as cases of alleged medical negligence and the recommendations of that Committee are expected shortly.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY - ARREARS

(No. B/319) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the arrears on revenue, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount thereof in relation to the –

- (a) Value Added Tax;
- (b) Gaming Tax;
- (c) Sales Tax, and
- (d) Companies Division, indicating the steps taken to recover same.

(Withdrawn)

FISH & FISH PRODUCTS - TESTING

(No. B/320) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether he will state if Government has entered into an agreement with a private laboratory for testing fish and fish products and if so, indicate

- (a) When, and
- (b) the amount of money paid out as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

SOLIDARITY LEVY – AMOUNT COLLECTED

(No. B/321) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Solidarity Levy, he will state the amount of money collected for each of the last three years, indicating how these sums have been used.

(Withdrawn)

ALIMONY - NON-COMPLIANCE

(No. B/322) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Attorney-General whether he will state if he has received complaints from the public, especially mothers, for non-compliance with arrangements in respect of alimony and, if so, indicate the measures he proposes to take.

(Withdrawn)

SEHDA - RESTRUCTURING

(No. B/323) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the Small Handicraft Enterprises Development Authority, he will state if he will consider a complete restructuring thereof with a view to rendering it more proactive and supportive of the small and medium enterprises, having regard to their potential for employment creation.

Reply: My Ministry is presently working towards a complete restructuring of the SME sector in Mauritius with a view to enhance their potential for employment creation and thus increasing their contribution in the economy of the country.

As the House is aware, the SEHDA Act 2005 caters only for small enterprises, i.e. enterprises with up to 10 employees. My Ministry is coming up with a new legislation for the SME sector to, *inter alia*, broaden the scope of jurisdiction to include the medium enterprises. Clear definitions for small and medium enterprises will be spelt out therein.

Under the provisions of the new legislation, it is expected that a boost will be given to the SME Sector, through the creation of a more responsive framework thus enhancing their productivity and potential for employment creation.

ST PIERRE & QUARTIER MILITAIRE - MARKETS - RENOVATION

(No. B/324) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the St Pierre and Quartier Militaire public markets, he will state if Government proposes to renovate same.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that both the Saint Pierre and Quartier Militaire market fairs have already been renovated.

With regard to the Saint Pierre market fair, the following works were undertaken in March 2008-

- Provision of six stalls for fish and meat.
- Construction of thirteen new stalls for food and cake sellers.
- Construction of block wall at the first floor.

As far as the Quartier Militaire market fair is concerned, works were carried out in January 2009 as follows-

- (a) waterproofing and painting of the building;
- (b) construction of 100 stalls for haberdashery and 35 stalls for vegetables;
- (c) extension of building to cater for five stalls for fish and meat;
- (d) construction of drain;
- (e) fixing and construction of enclosure for security reason;
- (f) upgrading of lighting network, and
- (g) extension of works at the front of the building to house all cakesellers.

ADDITIONAL STIMULUS PACKAGE - CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS – TAX CONCESSIONS

(No. B/325) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the construction projects which have started since 01 January 2009 to date, he will state the number thereof, which are eligible to concessions on the Land Transfer Tax and Registration Duty granted through the Additional Stimulus Package.

Reply: I am informed by the MRA that since 01 January 2009 to date, 3 construction projects have been registered with the Authority, namely-

- (a) construction of a showroom and service repairs workshop for Toyota (Mauritius) Ltd at Riche Terre on 14,677 square metres of land for a total investment of Rs169 m.;
- (b) residential development of Les Allées d’Helvetia at Moka on 22,136 square metres of land for a total investment of Rs350 million, and
- (c) residential development of Springfield Residence at Grand Baie on 9,961 square metres of land for a total investment of Rs100 million.

These projects which would exceed Rs50 million during period 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2011, would thus benefit from the exemption of registration duty and land transfer tax as provided under the Additional Stimulus Package.

NATIONAL PAY COUNCIL MEETINGS

(No. B/326) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the National Pay Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to -

- (a) if its terms of reference has been amended and
- (b) the number of meetings of the Council held, since July 2008 to date.

Reply: I must inform the House that the terms of reference of the NPC are determined by Government. No amendments thereto are envisaged.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that no meeting of the Council has been held since July 2008. I am further informed that a meeting of the Council has been scheduled for 07 May this year.

TROU D'EAU DOUCE - TUCK SHOPS - RENTAL

(No. B/327) Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the rental of the Tuck shops at Trou D'Eau Douce, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Beach Authority, information as to if a tender exercise has been launched and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Beach Authority that an invitation to bid for the rental of one tuck shop at Trou D'Eau Douce public beach has been launched on 08 April 2009. The closing date for submission of bids has been fixed on 30 April 2009.

INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUP TRUST FUND - PROJECTS

(No. B/328) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the funding of projects under The Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to-

- (a) the types thereof and
- (b) the eligibility criteria laid down therefor.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that one of the main objective of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups is to implement projects with a view to assisting vulnerable and needy families in improving their living conditions so that they can better integrate the mainstream of the society.

Accordingly, with regard to part (a) of the question the Trust Fund has been implementing the following projects/schemes:

Firstly, community based projects which are initiated and implemented through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO'S) and where emphasis is placed on people's participation. In this respect, the Trust Fund focuses on the provision of -

- (i) needs in terms CIS housing units and related facilities;
- (ii) social infrastructure to improve the immediate surroundings of the community;
- (iii) education support to school children in terms of school materials, uniforms, shoes and related items.

Secondly, micro-credit scheme to enable the vulnerable households to increase their revenue through income generating activities

Thirdly, loan scheme to needy students pursuing their tertiary education at the University of Mauritius, University of Technology, IVTB or the Technical School Management Trust Fund.

Furthermore, in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/49, I informed the House on 31 March 2009 that a Programme, known as Eradication of Absolute Poverty (EAP), has been put in place which focuses on the 229 pockets of poverty. The EAP Programme which is being steered by a Committee set up under the Trust Fund is adopting an integrated approach within the identified pockets of poverty in partnership with the private sector, government agencies and NGO's in order to eliminate absolute poverty. The objective for this Financial Year is to assist some 500 families in these pockets of poverty.

In the meantime, the Committee has developed a scheme to ensure that no child of pre-primary school age from vulnerable families is left out of school. Children living in the pockets of poverty who are not attending pre-primary schools are encouraged through a package of incentives to attend school regularly. These children are being provided a free meal, school fees, transport (if required) as well as school materials.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, the eligibility criteria for each type of project are being tabled.

HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/329) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if Health Care Assistants have recently been recruited and, if so, table a list thereof.

(Withdrawn)

POSTER PANELS - INSTALLATION

(No. B/330) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the poster panels, he will state-

- (a) the number thereof, constituency-wise, indicating their respective location and
- (b) if he proposes to increase the number thereof temporarily, in view of the forthcoming Labour Day and, if so, indicate their proposed location constituency-wise.

Reply: I am informed that a total of 361 poster panels have been installed. Out of these, 88 have been installed by my Ministry and the remaining 273 by local authorities around the island. These are in addition to the 200 temporary poster panels which were installed in the Constituency No. 8 of Quartier Militaire/Moka in connection with the recent by-elections.

The installation by my Ministry of some additional 90 poster panels is in progress.

I am arranging for a list of the localities, where poster panels have been set up, to be laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

Moreover, my Ministry is presently arranging for the installation of a total number of 100 pairs of specially designed poles for affixing banners countrywide.

Concerning part (b) of the question, my Ministry has, at this stage, no plan to provide additional poster panels in view of the costs involved and specially having regard to the fact that these structures will be used temporarily only while the additional permanent ones are already being set up across the country.

I shall invite my colleagues to encourage the use of these popular and eco-friendly modes of publicity for the forthcoming Labour Day and other similar events.

DR. A. G. JEETOO HOSPITAL AND QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL - SERVICES

(No. B/331) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he will state if he has effected site visits at the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, Port Louis and the Queen Victoria Hospital, Quatre Bornes to assess the services provided to the patients thereat and, if so, the improvements he proposes to bring thereto.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that I am regularly visiting all public hospitals in Mauritius with a view to assessing the services provided to patients and to ensure that remedial measures are taken promptly wherever required.

In fact, over the last few months, I have visited Victoria Hospital, Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and other health institutions on several occasions.

As far as Dr. Jeetoo Hospital is concerned, this hospital covers a catchment area of 322,000 inhabitants. Last year, 2 million patients attended the hospital, Area Health Centres and Community Health Centres of the region compared to 1.9 million in the year 2007. I have to inform the House that the implementation of stage I of the new Dr. Jeetoo Hospital is in progress. This new hospital will cover a surface area of 37,000 sq metres and will provide all the facilities of a modern hospital including MRI and CT Scan and various other high tech medical services. In order not to disrupt the continuity of services, appropriate arrangements have been made at the hospital level, bearing in mind the safety and comfort of both patients and personnel.

As regards Victoria Hospital, I wish to inform the House that this hospital covers a catchment area of 356,000 inhabitants 1.9 million patients attended the Hospital, AHCs and CHCs of the region in the year 2008 compared to 1.8 million in the year 2007. In view of the limited operating capacity presently available, a New Operating Block comprising 6 operating theatres and an ICU Ward with a capacity of 10 beds will be constructed shortly.

Moreover, as part of the modernization project, Victoria Hospital is now equipped with a brand new MRI Machine costing Rs34 m., a new cobalt machine for the treatment of cancer patients at the cost of Rs36 m., a new X-Ray machine at the cost of Rs2 m. and a new C-Arm at the cost of Rs4.3 m.

Following my visits to the hospitals, actions have also been initiated for -

(a) **Services**

- (i) The waiting time at the Accident & Emergency Department not to exceed five minutes for genuine emergencies and 20 minutes for a first consultation, and
- (ii) Extra sessions to be effected after normal working hours to reduce waiting time for surgeries.

(b) **Security**

- (i) Police Officers and security guards to be posted at all times at the Accident & Emergency Unit, and
- (ii) an alarm system and a Close Circuit Television (CCTV) systems to be installed at risk areas as a deterrent.

(c) **General Cleanliness and Hygiene**

- (i) Rodent Control Services to be contracted out, and
- (ii) the cleaning of wards and upkeeping of the yard to be improved.

(d) **Personnel**

5 Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers to be posted during peak hours at the Accident and Emergency Unit of Victoria and Dr. Jeetoo Hospitals.

With a view to enhancing customer satisfaction, my Ministry is embarking on the implementation of the MS ISO 9001-2008 in all hospitals and AHCs and CHCs as well as other health services.

PUBLIC OFFICERS - CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE - TRAINING

(No. B/332) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to customer care service, he will state if public officers who are in regular contact with the public have undergone training therein, since 2006 to date and, if so, indicate-

- (a) the number of officers
 - (i) trained
 - (ii) remaining to be trained
- (b) the monitoring put up to ensure that the acquired skills are put into effect and
- (c) if new measures for the improvement thereof are being contemplated.

Reply: This government not only believes in “Putting People First” but is also committed and determined to translate this principle into reality. The vision of my Ministry is to create a modern and efficient Public Service, ensure good governance and achieve excellence in the delivery of public services.

To make this a reality, there is no better way than to focus on training and development of our human resources to make them more efficient and more skillful in their job. My Ministry acts as a driver, a catalyst and a facilitator for the training and development of public officers. However ambitious we are in our vision and mission, there is a limit to what we can achieve given our scarce and limited resources.

My Ministry is responsible, among other matters for training and staff development, particularly for officers of the General Services Cadre and the Human Resource Management Cadre. My Ministry also assists other Ministries and Departments in mounting and conducting training programme that cut across the Civil Service.

In this context, my Ministry set up a specialized training programme in Customer Care and invited all Ministries and Departments to nominate public officers. Following that invitation, some 2,700 nominations were received and my Ministry has trained all these officers during period 2007-2008.

I also wish to point out that a module on customer Care is included in most of the other training programme, as well as induction courses for new entrants, thereby ensuring that a maximum number of public officers is sensitized on this area of service delivery.

I am informed that since 2006 a total around 8,570 officers have followed and completed training in Customer Care organized by my Ministry and other Ministries and Departments.

Training is an ongoing process and my Ministry attends to requests for such training as and when Ministries and Departments formulate the same to us. It is our policy to encourage continuous training for all officers, especially those who are the interface between the Organisation and the citizen/client. One recent case in point is the training in Communication and Customer Care organized jointly with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life for Hospital Telephonists and Receptionists.

With regard to part (b) and (c) of the question, each Ministry and Department does the monitoring of its own services. However, my Ministry also assists Ministries and Departments to adopt a customer centric approach by implementing simple measures to enhance delivery of counter and customer services. In this context, "Guidelines on Improving Counter and Customer Services" have been published in the form of a booklet and widely circulated, as well as posted online on the website of my Ministry.

As yet another means to evaluate the level of public service delivery, my Ministry has introduced a new reform initiative, commonly known as 'Mystery Shopping'. Through this initiative, the standards and level of service delivery of public organizations are assessed from the viewpoint of customers. Key aspects evaluated are Staff Behaviour and Service Delivery by front desk officers, Waiting Areas and Waiting Experience of customers.

Further, my Ministry under the Improvement of Counter Services Scheme, assists Ministries and Departments to upgrade and modernise their counter services. I need to point out that since 2006 to date, my Ministry has

funded to the tune of some Rs5.4 million, 50 projects relating to improvement of counter services in various Ministries/Departments which have regular contact with the public.

CUREPIPE AND MIDLANDS –FLOOD PRONE AREAS

(No. B/333) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to regular flood prone areas in the Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, he will state the –

- (a) number thereof falling under the purview of his Ministry and
- (b) remedial measures Government proposes to take, giving details of each project, especially in terms of cost and time frame.

Reply: The information sought, which will be tabled in due course in the National Assembly, comprises the following lists:

- (i) flood prone areas listed in GIBB's Report of 2003;
- (ii) drain projects completed since financial year 2007/2008 to date;
- (iii) ongoing projects since financial year 2007/2008 to date;
- (iv) drains projects in pipeline.

Further I would also like to inform the House that bids for the dredging of rivers, clearing and consolidation of river banks in the region of Curepipe was invited by the Environment Division of my Ministry on 23 March 2009 with closing date on 2 April 2009.

The contract for the works has been awarded on 6 April 2009.

**CHASTEAUNEUF, DR REID AND MAINGARD, BEAU-BASSIN
- SEWERAGE WORKS**

(No. B/334) Mr M. Allet (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage works being carried out at the Chasteauneuf, Dr. Reid and Maingard region, Beau-Bassin, he will state -

- (a) when was the contract allocated
- (b) the expected date of completion thereof and
- (c) the number of houses to be connected.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that house connections in the regions of Chasteauneuf, Dr. Reid and Maingard in Beau Bassin are being carried out under contract WW151Z which pertains to the design and construction of sewer reticulations, house connections and maintenance works in the already severed areas of the Plaines Wilhems District. The contract was awarded on 23 September 2008 for a duration of 2 years and is expected to be completed in October 2010.

As regards the last part of the question, the total number of applications received for house connections in this contract is 594 and 250 houses have already been connected.

61 applications for house connections were received from the regions mentioned, out of which 59 are technically feasible and can be connected to the sewer network. To-date, 41 connections have already been completed.

**ANAHITA WORLD CLASS SANCTUARY-BEAU CHAMP -
PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE (TAXI) LICENCES**

(No. B/335) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that the National Transport Authority has issued notice for the granting of Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) Licences on transfer to operate from the Anahita World Class Sanctuary-Beau Champ and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to if many surrounding localities have been omitted from the list, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: I am informed that a Press Communiqué was issued by the National Transport Authority on 04 April 2009, inviting applications for the grant of eight Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) licences on transfer to operate taxis from Anahita World Class Sanctuary–Beau Champ.

I received representations from my Colleague, Hon. L. Bundhoo, Minister of Environment and National Development Unit to the effect that some localities situated in the vicinity of the Anahita World Class Sanctuary had been omitted.

I caused the matter to be looked into by the National Transport Authority and it was found that a technical error occurred and certain localities had been inadvertently omitted.

Necessary corrective action has been initiated and a fresh communiqué will be published shortly in order to allow holders of Public Service Vehicle (Taxi) licences from the localities, which had been missed out to submit their applications for consideration.

CITÉ LA CURE - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/336) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that some 20 families living at Cité La Cure, behind the NHDC Housing Quarters, have not been supplied with water connection for years and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons thereof, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/288)

ASSEMBLÉE DE DIEU - COMPREHENSIVE PAPER

(No. B/337) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to legislation for the incorporation of the *Assemblée de Dieu*, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed that the substantive Attorney-General is looking into the matter and is preparing a comprehensive paper on this issue. He will inform this House in due course of the stand to be adopted.

PLAINE VERTE GARDEN – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/338) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the bad state of the Plaine Verte Garden, from the swimming pool to the Paul et Virginie Street and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof, indicating if provision will be made for -

- (a) an increase in the number of
 - (i) benches
 - (ii) lighting points
 - (iii) dustbins
 - (iv) entrances and
- (b) repairing of
 - (i) existing benches
 - (ii) lighting points and
 - (iii) fencing thereat

Reply: I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that the following upgrading works have already been undertaken to the Plaine Verte garden -

- (i) Construction of a jogging track.
- (ii) Renewal of fencing.
- (iii) Fixing of 16 benches.

- (iv) Provision of 20 new lighting points.
- (v) Upgrading of alleys.
- (vi) Construction of a new kiosk.
- (vii) Leveling and planting works.

I am further informed that the Municipal Council envisages to carry out the following works -

- Fixing of twelve additional benches and three metals bins.
- Provision of four additional entrances.
- Fixing of additional lighting points.
- Upgrading of the pond whose specifications are being finalized.