

No. 13 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 09 November 2010**

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (ORAL)

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10 (2)

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (WRITTEN)

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

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>

Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK

Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues

Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah

Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms

Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed

Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

Hon Yatindra Nath Varma

Attorney General

Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen

Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection

Members

Members

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
<i>Chief Hansard Reporter and</i>	Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie
<i>Sub-Editor</i>	
<i>Senior Library Officer</i>	Pallen, Mr Noël
<i>Serjeant-at-Arms</i>	Munroop, Mr Kishore

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 13 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 09 November 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHETTIAR, MR ANGIDI VEERIAH, GOSK, CBE - OBITUARY

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is with deep sadness that we learn of the demise of Mr Angidi Veeriah Chettiar, GOSK (Grand Officer of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, CBE (Commander of the British Empire), Vice-President of the Republic on 15 September 2010 at the age of 82.

Mr Chettiar was born on 29 April 1928 at Madurai in the State of Tamil Nadu in India. He was only eight years old when he came to Mauritius with his father who was a businessman. He received his primary education at the Young Men's Hindu-Aided School in Port Louis and his secondary education at the Royal College in Port Louis.

In 1946, he proceeded to India for his tertiary education. During his stay in India, he occupied the post of Deputy Chairman of the Congress Committee from 1948 to 1950 and served as Member of the Municipal Council of Virudhnagar from 1948 to 1951.

Mr Chettiar returned to Mauritius in 1952, at the age of 24, and he joined the Labour Party immediately. This was the starting point of a long political career and of continued contribution to the welfare of the country. He was fully involved in the struggle for independence and he remained totally loyal to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam all through. He was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in the General Elections of 1967 in the Constituency of Vacoas and Floreal. This hard-earned victory tilted the balance decisively in favour of the country's political emancipation. He had the privilege of casting his vote in the National Assembly in August 1967 when the then Prime Minister presented the motion for our country to attain full sovereignty.

In 1976, Mr Chettiar was re-elected in the same Constituency of Vacoas and Phoenix. He was then appointed as Government Chief Whip. He was also a Member of the Public Accounts Committee and had assumed for some time the post of Chairperson of the Committee.

In 1976, Mr Chettiar was also appointed Treasurer of the Labour Party, a post which he occupied until 28 June 1997 and he occupied it with probity and integrity.

On 22 June 1981, Mr Chettiar was appointed Minister of State at the Prime Minister's Office.

On 28 June 1997, he was appointed vice-President of the Republic, a post which he occupied until February 2002 when he resigned after withholding his assent to the Prevention of Terrorism Bill. On 24 August 2007, he was again appointed vice-President of the Republic and occupied that post until he passed away on 15 September. During the whole 10 years of his vice-Presidency he brought humanism and rigour to the Office.

He was also elected Mayor of the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix in 1970 and he was also a Member of the Moka/Flacq District Council.

He also occupied the post of Chairperson of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. In 1970, he became a Member of the Advisory Council and remained in post for twelve years.

From 1969 to 1982, he served as Chairperson of the Ex-Servicemen Welfare Fund. He was the General Secretary and, subsequently, the Chairperson of the Tamil Temples Federation of Mauritius.

Mr Chettiar had also served as Administrator to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR) Memorial Centre for Culture at Port Louis. With the passing away of Mr Chettiar, we have lost a true patriot.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request you to be kind enough to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the deep condolences of the Government and of this Assembly to the bereaved family.

The Leader of the Opposition: Mr Speaker, Sir, I join with what the hon. Prime Minister has just said. When I called at his house, some three weeks back, on the occasion of his departure, it brought me back to 15 years ago. Indeed, it was in his house that the Labour Party and the MMM sealed an electoral alliance for the General Elections of 1995 which we won, as we all know. He was very much instrumental in allowing this electoral deal to be made and when sparks started flying between us in the months following, he did his best as the fire fighter. We will always remember that. I am sure we all already missed him and I am sure he will be missed in Madurai also, Madras in those days, when he left his native Tamil Nadu. I would request you, Mr Speaker, Sir, to convey, not only our condolences, but all our sympathy to his family.

Mr Speaker: I associate myself with the tribute paid to the late vice-President, Mr Angidi Veeriah Chettiar, GOSK, CBE by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the assurance of our sincere condolences.

ABDOOL, MR HAROON RASCHID KHAN – OBITUARY

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also with deep regret that we learnt of the demise of Mr Haroon Raschid Khan Abdool on 29 September 2010 at the age of 76.

He was born on 08 October 1934 at Plaine Verte. He attended the Young Men`s School for his Primary Education and pursued his Secondary Education at the Royal College of Curepipe.

He was one of the founding members of the *Comité d`Action Musulman (CAM)* and occupied the post of Secretary General of the party in 1956.

He was also an Editor of the Advance Newspaper. He was an indefectible supporter for independence and in the 1963 General Elections, Mr Abdool was elected in Constituency No. 1 - Port Louis Central. He was a member of the Mauritian delegation to London in 1965 for the Constitutional Conference.

In 1967, Mr Abdool ran again for the General Elections in the same Constituency of Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, but was not returned. However, he joined the Legislative Assembly as best loser and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

He stood again for the General Elections in 1976 in Constituency No.2 - Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, but was not returned.

After the 1982 General Elections, Mr Abdool retired from active politics. He was appointed Ambassador to Egypt and served from 26 May 1996 to 20 August 1998.

He was also an executive member of various socio-cultural organisations. He founded the Muslim Youth Federation and was a founding member of the Madad-UI-Islam Society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request you to be kind enough to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the deep condolences of the Government and of this Assembly to the bereaved family.

The Leader of the Opposition: I join with what the hon. Prime Minister has just said, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did not have the opportunity of knowing Mr Haroon Abdool personally, but the hon. Prime Minister has just reminded us of the distinguished career which, as a politician, but also, as a diplomat, that he has had. I would, therefore, in this case also, request you to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Mr Speaker: I associate myself with the tribute paid to the late Mr Haroon Raschid Khan Abdool by Dr the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the assurance of our sincere condolences.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President –

- (a) The Annual Report 2009-2010 of the Ombudsperson for Children.
- (b) The Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 177 of 2010).

B. Prime Minister's Office –

- (a) The Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for the Financial Year 2007-2008 (In Original).
- (b) The Annual Report on the Treatment of Offenders in Mauritius for the Year 2008.
- (c) The Civil Aviation (Terminal Expansion Fee) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 205 of 2010).

C. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities –

The Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Central Water Authority for the year 2007/2008.

D. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The International Financial Organisations (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 176 of 2010).
- (b) The Securities (Authorization of Foreign Investment Dealers) Rules 2010 (Government Notice No. 178 of 2010).
- (c) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 182 of 2010).

- (d) The Gambling Regulatory Authority (Government Lotteries) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 167 of 2010).
- (e) The Finance and Audit (Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 169 of 2010).
- (f)
 - (i) The Schedule to Virement (Contingencies) Warrants Nos. 1 to 56 of July – December 2009;
 - (ii) Virement Warrants Nos. 1 to 81 of July – December 2009; and
 - (iii) Retrospective Virement Warrants Nos. 215 and 216 of 2008- 2009 (In Original).
- (g) The Investment Promotion (Real Estate Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 200 of 2010).
- (h) The Digest of Agricultural Statistics 2009.
- (i) The Digest of Statistics on Rodrigues 2009.
- (j) The Digest of Social Security Statistics 2009.
- (k) The Digest of Demographic Statistics 2009.
- (l) The Annual Reports of the Accountant General and The Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2009 and for the period 1 July 2009 and 31 December 2009 (In Original).
- (m) The Digest of Education Statistics 2009.
- (n) The National Accounts of Mauritius 2009.
- (o) The Annual Digest of Statistics 2009.
- (p) The Digest of Labour Statistics 2009.

E. Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping –

- (a) The Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund for the period July 2008 to June 2009 (In Original).
- (b) The Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 170 of 2010).
- (c) The Road Traffic (Prescribed Devices) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 203 of 2010).
- (d) The Road Traffic (Taxi, Bus and Lorry Stands) (Amendment) Order 2010 (Government Notice No. 201 of 2010).

F. Ministry of Housing and Lands –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Town and Country Planning Board for the year ended 30 June 2009.

G. Ministry of Education and Human Resources –

- (a) The Annual Reports of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for the periods 1994 to 1995, 1996, 1997 and 2008/2009.

- (b) The Annual Reports of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute for the period 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.
- (c) The Annual Reports of the Private Secondary Schools Authority for the years 2007 and 2008.

H. Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security –

- (a) The Annual Report 2007 of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board.
- (b) The Annual Reports of the Mauritius Meat Authority for the financial years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.
- (c) The Annual Report 2009 of the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI).
- (d) The Annual Report and Accounts of the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation for the year 2008-2009.

I. Ministry of Youth and Sports –

The Annual Reports and Audited Accounts of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports for the years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 (In Original)

J. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare & Reforms Institutions –

- (a) The National Savings Fund (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 183 of 2010).
- (b) The National Pensions (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 184 of 2010).
- (c) The National Pensions (Increase in Pensions) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 185 of 2010).
- (d) The National Pensions (Pensions Points) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 186 of 2010).
- (e) The National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 187 of 2010).
- (f) The National Pensions (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 188 of 2010).
- (g) The National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 189 of 2010).

K. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

- (a) The Grand Port Savanne District Council (Control of Premises used for Commercial and other related activities) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 166 of 2010).
- (b) The Moka/Flacq District Council (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 179 of 2010).
- (c) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 194 of 2010).

- (d) The Vacoas/Phoenix (Fair) (Amendment III) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 195 of 2010).
- (e) Public Notification of Land Use for the Purpose of Cemetery in accordance with section 162(2) of the Public Health Act (Government Notice No. 181 of 2010).
- (f) Public Notification of Land Use for the Purpose of Cemetery in accordance with section 162(2) of the Public Health Act (Government Notice No. 191 of 2010).

L. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life –

The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 202 of 2010).

M. Minister of Information and Communication Technology –

- (a) The Information and Communication Technologies (Fraud Tracking Account Charge) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 168 of 2010).
- (b) The Information and Communication Technologies (Universal Service Fund) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 207 of 2010).

N. Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues –

- (a) The Fisheries and Marine Resources (Extension of Net Fishing Season) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 196 of 2010).
- (b) The Fisheries and Marine Resources (Export of Fish and Fish Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 204 of 2010).

O. Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms –

The Civil Establishment (Amendment No. 2) Order 2010 (Government Notice No. 171 of 2010).

P. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment –

The Attorneys' and Notaries' Workers (Remuneration) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 192 of 2010).

Q. Attorney General's Office –

The Supreme Court (Mediation) Rules 2010 (Government Notice No. 180 of 2010)

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

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 163 of 2010).
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 20) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 164 of 2010).

- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 21) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 165 of 2010).
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 11) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 172 of 2010).
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 22) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 173 of 2010).
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 23) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 174 of 2010).
- (g) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 24) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 175 of 2010).
- (h) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 190 of 2010).
- (i) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 25) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 193 of 2010).
- (j) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 12) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 197 of 2010).
- (k) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 26) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 198 of 2010).
- (l) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 27) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 199 of 2010).
- (m) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 206 of 2010).
- (n) The Annual Report of the Small Enterprises and Handicraft Development Authority for the year 2007-2008.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SALARY COMPENSATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, he is aware that there has been a loss in the purchasing power of the employees of the public and private sectors, old-age pensioners and social aid recipients, since 2005 to date and if so, will he state if an adequate compensation will be paid as from 01 January 2011, to make up for the loss of purchasing power, indicating if –

- (a) the thresholds for the payment thereof will be raised adequately, and
- (b) special consideration will be given to the employees, old-age pensioners and social aid recipients of Rodrigues.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will also reply to PQ 1B/575 which deals with the same issues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in my view, since 2006 workers at the lowest rung of the ladder who had previously been receiving compensation on at least the full inflation rate have not been compensated adequately. It may also be noted that overall earnings have been above inflation in the last five years.

Regarding pensions and social aid beneficiaries, their compensation is a matter of Government social protection policy as announced in the Budget.

I would like to remind the House that in the past no Government has ever given any compensation for *rattrapage* in terms of inflation not accounted for in previous years. Compensation has only been awarded for loss in purchasing power arising in the preceding year. Whilst in some years like in 1987/88, and 1988/89, no compensation was awarded when the inflation rate was below 5 percent.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the compensation of employees, which includes wages and salaries as well as the value of the social contribution payable by employers, averaged 36.7% as a share of the Gross Domestic Product at market price (GDP) between 2005 and 2010.

The ratio which was 37.2% in 2005 declined to 36.1% in 2006 and to 35.5% in 2007. However, it subsequently rose to 36.0% in 2008 and to 37.4% in 2009. The latest forecast of the CSO indicates that the ratio will rise further to 37.8% this year. It is estimated that wages represent around 85% of compensation of employees and this figure has been obtained from the Census of Economic Activities undertaken in 2007.

Moreover, private consumption, in terms of the share to GDP, as measured by final household consumption expenditure, averaged 72.2% during the period 2005 to 2010. The ratio was 68.7% in 2005; 70.5% in 2006; 70.4% in 2007; 70.5% in 2008, and 74.6% in 2009. The projections indicate that the ratio will be around 74.5% this year.

I wish to inform the House that the cumulative inflation rate for calendar years 2005 to 2009 was around 40%. Taking into account the latest projected inflation rate for calendar year 2010, which is around 2.7% the cumulative inflation rate works out to be around 44%.

However, as the House is aware, till June 2009, annual compensation for loss in purchasing power was made effective as from July of each year when such awards were granted. With the change in fiscal year, compensation is now being provided as from the first month of the calendar year. Accordingly, for a proper analysis, it is more appropriate to use inflation rate for the period in respect of which the compensation has been awarded. If we take the period starting July 2005 to December 2010, the cumulative inflation rate is estimated to be around 41%.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as income distribution is concerned, as Members may be aware, we normally obtain information on household income distribution from the Household Budget Surveys (HBS) that are conducted by the CSO every five years. The last survey was in 2006/2007 Household Budget Survey and the degree of inequality in income as measured by the Gini coefficient was 0.388 as against 0.371 in 2001/2002. The next Household Budget Survey is planned in 2012 and the results will be released in 2013. A proper assessment of the distribution of the income would be made after the results of the survey are released.

Mr Speaker, Sir, please allow me to remind the House that this Government is committed to support households and income earners to ensure that there is improvement in their living conditions. We have already taken a number of initiatives to address issues of national interest, including in the ERCP measures to support job creation and to protect jobs in critical sectors as well as measures to ensure long term viability of our enterprises and to promote new enterprises and entrepreneurship.

The House may wish to note that protecting the economic health of our nation is critical to ensure the welfare of both workers and the population at large. We need to look to the future and be prepared for all eventual crises, whilst at the same time tapping the opportunities that are likely to arise from global recovery and rebalancing.

However, as a caring Government, we also believe that the gains from growth need to be fairly distributed and more importantly, workers' interests need to be protected. We are convinced that greater participation among stakeholders to address issues of national interest, including the interest of workers and broader labour issues, will further improve the quality of life of our citizens.

As regards compensation for 2010, Government has committed itself to give due consideration to workers who produce the wealth of the nation. In this respect, the National Pay Council has been disbanded and is being replaced by a National Tripartite Forum (NTF).

The NTF will be a permanent forum for discussions amongst the social partners with a view to better understanding and responding to the challenges that face the country. The NTF will have several sub-committees to examine and make proposals on issues which may include economic and social development, labour legislation, labour market and employment creation and, of course, the quantum of the annual salary compensation to be paid to workers to compensate them for the rise in the cost of living.

In this context, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that Government is setting up the framework for the NTF to discuss the important issues raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. These issues will clearly be an important part of the agenda to be addressed by the NTF once it is fully operational.

The NTF will be a forum for Government, Unions and Employers to most effectively deal with compensation issues including thresholds and any special considerations that may be required for particular groups of workers. However, compensation of pensioners and other beneficiaries of Government assistance are and have always been a budget matter. In this context, I will request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be patient for a few more days until the presentation of the Budget.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been provided the same average figures, general references which hon. Sithanen used to provide every occasion, including in December when we discussed the 2010 Budget and wage compensation. I am very surprised to hear that kind of language more of the same. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance whether he remembers what he said in December in this august Assembly? I quote a few passages –

« Pendant 4 ans les travailleurs ont été privés de compensation salariale adéquate. Le patronat a économisé plus de R 3 milliards sur la compensation salariale. »

He even came with figures.

« *L'inflation cumulative de juin 2006 à juin 2007 : 32%. Les travailleurs ont à peine obtenu 15% de compensation salariale en moyenne. Ils ont donc été privés de 17% de compensation pour la perte du pouvoir d'achat* »

He came forward to request a wage compensation that would provide for *rattrapage du pouvoir d'achat* lost since 2005. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance which is which? Is it what he said in December with figures or what he has repeated from what the former hon. Minister of Finance used to say?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, the hon. Leader of Opposition has his opinion on the way that I answered this question, but I'll leave it to him. With regard to what I said before there is nothing contradictory with what I am saying today. I have just replied that it is in my view that workers who are at the lowest rung of the ladder have not been adequately compensated. But, on the other hand, I have given figures in relation to salaries, wages, benefits, as a percentage of GDP. I have given all the percentage year by year to show what has been the situation for the past five years. What I have said in my speech at that time was that - in fact, the language was totally a different language. Probably, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is getting confused. The language that was used ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister is confused!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: I maintain that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is confused. He cannot distinguish what I have been saying with what the former Minister of Finance has been saying.

(Interruptions)

I know it is difficult for him to sit down and to listen to that. My comments, at that time pertained mainly to the fact that my predecessor had been saying that there were green shoots, early harvest and bumper crop while, at the same time, there was a contradiction in what he did. What I said finally in my speech

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please! Please! Order! Minister of Finance!

Mr Jugnauth: Let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition ...

(Interruptions)

If they want to make comments, I have to listen.

Mr Speaker: I make a humble request to hon. Members of this House that they should behave and keep quiet, especially that we have ...

Mr Bérenger: Le ministre est en train de noyer le poisson dans l'eau!

Mr Speaker : Je dois attirer l'attention des honorables membres que nous avons l'ancien Premier ministre de la République Française, Monsieur Jean-Pierre Raffarin, parmi nous aujourd'hui. J'espère que nous allons garder le décorum.

Mr Jugnauth : In my speech ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right. It is a very serious matter. We have to keep quiet and let the hon. Minister answer so that maximum information can come out.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just quote one sentence of my speech. I said –

“Je fais un dernier pressant appel au gouvernement - je ne dirai pas pour revoir la situation - pour qu'à l'avenir on change de système. »

And, if you go according to my speech, you will see that I was always against and I was always criticising the setting-up of the National Pay Council because the formula that was adopted for calculating ...

(Interruptions)

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to speak ...

Mr Speaker: Order, please! We are losing time. If I have to stand up every time and ask Members to keep quiet, then the time will be over in another fifteen minutes.

Mr Bérenger: But that's what the hon. Minister is doing on purpose.

Mr Speaker: No! The Minister is answering ...

(Interruptions)

No, I am sorry! A question has been put, I have no control on the answer of the Minister. The Minister is answering, let him answer.

Mr Jugnauth: What I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the formula that was adopted by the National Pay Council (NPC) was to take the inflation rate, divide it by two and to add to it the national productivity, and that was something that was done regularly. That is why, in this Government, we have taken a commitment to the workers and to the people. We have said that we are going to disband this NPC. In fact, we have come up with the National Tripartite Forum

and one of the issues that the National Tripartite Forum will have to deal with is salary compensation.

Mr Bérenger: May we know whether the commitment which the present Government took was to go back squarely to the *tripartisme*? Has the *tripartisme* functioned and worked until 2005? This is not what is taking place. Now, *une fois de plus, on noie le poisson dans l'eau!* We have now a National Tripartite Forum which, if it has time, will look at the wage compensation, whereas the *tripartisme*, old style until 2005, was specifically a Tripartite body to work on it, to calculate and to propose the yearly wage compensation. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is going to keep to his commitment? Are we going to go back to the Tripartite system, *le tripartisme qui a existé jusqu'en 2005* and when is that body going to sit to start working on the wage compensation?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government will honour its obligations as per what has been stated in our Programme. And, at this stage, everybody can see that there is discussion with the trade unions and the employers in order to set up this National Tripartite Forum and it's not *noyer le poisson dans l'eau*, far from that. There is a proposal on the table, the matter is being discussed, issues are going to be thrashed out and eventually, hopefully, we will come with the appropriate framework.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister of Finance had calculated in December last year that, therefore, the workers had lost 17% of their purchasing power – his mathematics. The trade unions have been asking for wage compensation between 15% to 20%. Of course, we can't expect to catch up in one go, but will the hon. Minister of Finance, at least, give us a guarantee that he won't go along with the ludicrous proposal of the Mauritius Employers' Federation: between zero and 1.5% wage compensation as from 01 January; that is, all those who supposedly do not have the capacity to pay, zero to 1.5%? Can we at least have the guarantee that we are not going to travel that way?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me repeat again what I have said. No Government has ever gone along the principles of any *rattrapage*, except that compensation has been given on the basis of inflation rate for the preceding year. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has been Minister of Finance for three years and if he is saying that there should be *rattrapage*, I think he should have practised, first of all, what he is preaching today.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, *il ne faut pas mettre la charrue devant les bœufs*. There is a proposal on the table which is actually being discussed with both the trade unions and the employers. They are going to give their views. At the end of the day, we will have to come up with a framework. That framework will then look at all the factors to be taken into consideration in order to decide for an appropriate salary compensation.

With regard to the employers, if they have made known their views about salary compensation, I am not going to own that. That is their views. On the other hand, the trade unions have made representations already. They have already stated what they would wish. But it is a matter for discussion and then, of course, appropriate decisions, as I said, will be taken.

Mr Bérenger: As regards thresholds, Mr Speaker, Sir, the former Minister of Finance not only did not give only adequate compensation, but he raised thresholds and lowered them at the expense of the lowest paid workers. Can I quote hon. Bodha, who was then in the Opposition? Both the now Minister of Finance and the then Minister of Finance - but let me quote him for a change. He said –

“The threshold, in fact, in 2005 and 2006 was Rs5,300, which was reduced to Rs2,700 and, in spite of all the years, today, the threshold is still Rs3,800.”

Therefore, a *rattrapage* was required and raising the thresholds. Not only that, the former Minister of Finance went so far as to put a ceiling of Rs12,000 monthly wages above that zero compensation. The MSM stood up against that all along, here in this august Assembly and outside. Therefore, can I ask whether this ceiling is going to be done away with and whether the thresholds are, at least, going to be restored to where they were before the former Minister of Finance started having a go at them?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me try to explain more clearly. With regard to threshold, this issue has to be discussed at the proper forum. I cannot, unilaterally, on my own, or even on behalf of Government, take a single-handed decision. That matter will be addressed tripartitely.

Secondly, the hon. Leader of the Opposition - I didn't want to go into that - fancies quoting what my colleague, hon. Bodha, has said, what I have said and so on. But if we have to go back to history - because he is talking about tripartite, that we should go back to the same system and so on - he was Minister of Finance, and there was tripartite. Who chaired the tripartite for three years?

(Interruptions)

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that we should try to install the same tripartite system that used to prevail before, but we must know that he didn't chair that meeting. In fact, he was very unhappy with the trade unions, and *il a même eu des mots très, très durs à l'égard des syndicalistes à cette époque*. I don't want to go into history.

Mr Bérenger: What I stopped chairing was not the tripartite meeting; it was a regular monthly meeting with the private sector and the trade unions. Go and check!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order, please! Order!

Mr Bérenger: On the part of my question which requests a special effort on behalf of Rodrigues, the hon. Minister of Finance travelled to Rodrigues recently. He must have met trade unions and other *Forces Vives* de Rodrigues. It is the trade unions on the main island here which are requesting - and I congratulate them for that - an extra effort, because in Rodrigues the inflation rate is still more than in Mauritius, especially for basic items like food. It is even much more than in Mauritius, and proportionally the poverty is more widespread in the population. Therefore, can I know whether policy decision has been taken to give special consideration to the situation in Rodrigues when we will discuss and finalise things on this year's compensation, that is, the compensation to take effect as from 01 January 2011?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, I am shocked that the memory of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is failing lamentably, I must say, because he did not chair the tripartite committee. I was in Government at that time.

(Interruptions)

I know. In fact, he delegated the then hon. Minister Sushil Khushiram to chair that tripartite meeting.

Secondly, again with regard to Rodrigues, we cannot now take a decision. Decision will be taken, of course, but we cannot now take a decision because what is the purpose otherwise of having a tripartite committee with all the attributes to discuss on salary compensation? They will have to factor in also the issue of Rodrigues and take that into consideration when coming with

recommendations, and that will ultimately be discussed at the level of the National Tripartite Forum.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I am quite surprised to hear that the vice-Prime Minister says there is no contradiction. In fact, there has been the promise...

Mr Speaker: Can I...

Mr Li Kwong Wing: ...under the previous mandate. Just one second!

Mr Speaker: No, I am on my feet. Can I just remind the hon. Member that he cannot comment on the answers? He has to put his questions.

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. From the reply of the vice-Prime Minister, the rate of inflation over the last five years has been 41%, and the compensation that has been given has amounted cumulative to 15%. So, there is a shortfall of 26% which has to be *rattrapé*. Will the hon. Minister of Finance tell the House whether he has any policy to redress this injustice that has been caused to the workers and to do that *rattrapage salarial* in view of the *rupture* of policy that he has promised?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, I have to intervene. The hon. Minister has answered this question and said that...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister has answered this question that no Government has adopted a *rattrapage* policy. He has answered this question. Could the hon. Member put question that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has not put?

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The point is that there has been no *rupture* in the policy. So, it is the same Sithanen policy. The question that I am going to ask concerns the installation of the new forum. What is the new mechanism that Government is putting in place to make sure that the criteria that is going to be used for wage compensation is going to incorporate the *rattrapage salarial* and not only the compensation for the inflation last year?

Mr Jugnauth: Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have given the hon. Member the chance to *rattraper* himself, but anyway...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has answered.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to *rattrapage*, the answer has already been given.

Now, with regard to the mechanism, I must say that it is at discussion stage right now and, of course, once there is agreement, there is consensus, that will be known.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister confirm to the House that, in spite of what he has said, the trade unions, the leaders of the different federations are very unhappy about the situation and complain that, a few days before the presentation of the Budget, they have written to the hon. Minister and, so far, no reply has been given to them concerning all these fundamental questions about the quantum and so on? Will he confirm whether he or the Financial Secretary will preside this *sous-comité* - because they also complain that the Minister and the FS are both passing the buck to each other - and will he give the guarantee to the House, to the nation and to the trade unions that the quantum will not be decided unilaterally and imposed upon the trade union federations?

Mr Jugnauth: The issues with regard to the mechanism are still at discussion stage and, therefore, we will have to wait for reactions and different proposals that are made so that there is finalisation.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the old-age pensioners and social aid recipients who have seen their *pouvoir d'achat* being eroded during the past five years, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he will consider going back to a system of tax exemption on the pensions and allocations given to these recipients?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, this is a matter for Budget, and I have stated that we will, of course, take the issue of pensioners into consideration for the Budget.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, as Rodrigues is mentioned in the PNQ, with regard to the present loss of purchasing power in Rodrigues and as Budget 2011 is coming soon, will the hon. vice-Prime Minister guarantee us that he will see to it that freight to autonomous Rodrigues, which has recently been proposed for an increase of about 30%, be frozen, and introduce a higher subsidy thereof to ease the population of Rodrigues who is facing a downturn economic situation?

Mr Jugnauth: That is a specific question with regard to freight, and I know that my colleague, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, hon. A. Bachoo, is looking into that matter.

Mr Speaker: Any other question?

Mr Bérenger: If I can put a last question after quoting what the hon. Minister said. I am quoting from Hansard, the official record: "*Pendant les quatre ans de ce côté de la Chambre -* meaning here the Opposition where it was at the time - *on a toujours dit que malheureusement* the Minister of Finance is looking in one direction only." I quote him again: "*Il a tout mis en œuvre pour servir les intérêts des possédants*", and we know how he went on and on, that the stimulus package, especially the financial assistance to private firms in the private sector, was "*regardé dans une direction seulement.*" After having heard him reply with the same average figures, the same way and the same arrogance as the former Minister of Finance, can I ask him to give us the guarantee that when the *compensation salariale* comes and the Budget, we are not going to have Sithanen without Sithanen? We are not going to have more of the same as we have had today.

Mr Jugnauth: M. le président, malheureusement le chef de l'opposition regarde dans la même direction que l'ancien ministre des finances. Je vais vous dire pourquoi. Il est tellement préoccupé par la perte du pouvoir d'achat pour les travailleurs, qu'est-ce qu'il est venu dire récemment ? Il a critiqué le gouverneur de la banque centrale pour dire que la roupie est trop forte. Cela implique une dépréciation de la roupie. Que veut dire dépréciation de la roupie? Cela veut dire augmentation de tous les prix de consommation et cela va à l'encontre des intérêts des travailleurs et des consommateurs. Donc, M. le président, il faut bien savoir que c'est bien que l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition ait soulevé cette question à l'Assemblée. Let me just give the guarantee to the House that we, as a caring Government, although in difficult situations and times when especially we had to face the European crisis, we are trying to do our utmost as this

relates to the workers and the interest of workers and I don't want to unilaterally give an opinion on the issue of salary compensation. As I said, we have to show respect to institutions, there is going to be one to decide and to discuss in a tripartite way with employers and the workers for this issue and then, of course, Government will assume its responsibility.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. I have to inform the House that PQ No. 1B/543 has been withdrawn.

LIQUOR AND ALCOHOL – RETAILERS – POLICE CHECKS

(No. 1B/526) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the licences of retailer of liquor and alcoholic products for on and off premises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the Police conducts regular checks in relation thereto with a view to ensuring that the conditions thereof are abided by.

The Prime Minister: M. le président, si vous me le permettez, je voudrais aussi saluer la présence de son Excellence le Premier ministre de la République Française, M. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, qui, bien qu'il soit en vacance privée, a trouvé le temps de venir voir comment nous débattons à l'Assemblée Nationale.

I have to answer the question, Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police does conduct checks on the premises of retailers of liquor and alcohol with a view to ensuring that the licensees do comply with the conditions attached to their licence issued by the Mauritius Revenue Authority. Police also enforces other regulations governing opening hours of liquor retail outlets as well as Public Health (Prohibition on advertising and sponsorship) regulations preventing persons from drinking in public places.

Regular inspections are carried out by the local Police of each Division, while additional checks are undertaken by the CID, the ADSU and the ERS whenever there are complaints against licensed premises selling liquor and alcohol.

During the last five years 22,543 checks have been carried out, with a total of 5,507 contraventions.

Ms Deerpalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Commissioner of Police has ever carried out an evaluation of their capacity to police the number of licences?

The Prime Minister: It is not an easy job. You know in Mauritius if we end up the way we are going, I will have to have a policeman for every individual in this country. They do try their best and also maybe I should add that one of the problems that we have is that we have a system in Mauritius that I keep feeling will shoot ourselves in the foot whoever is in Government. In spite of what the Government is saying, licenses are given by local authorities, the Mauritius Revenue Authority is involved as well as the Tourism Authority in the issuing of licenses. Three authorities have to be involved and I must add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, as far as the licenses are concerned, all that the Police can do is to look at the suitability of the building and whether there is a social impact on the issuing of the license. I should go even further and to my surprise I must say that even in cases when the Police have objected, on the social impact of the issuing of the licenses we have two Court cases where the decision has been pushed aside. In fact, we cannot go on like this and I intend to review the whole matter. I shall have to talk to the Commissioner of Police when he comes back and review the whole policy and the procedures relating to the issue of legal licenses. I believe there should be consultations, maybe, but only one authority.

Ms Deerpalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that every Tuesday when we come here we see the Government Gazette and we see loads and loads of applications. I have another question. Is the Police aware that all these licences are being given and does the Prime Minister intend to look, as he said, at the authorities, but also at the regions in which these licences are granted because we have a serious alcoholism problem in this country?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Police are doing remarkable works. I should add perhaps, Mr Speaker, Sir, in case I gave the wrong impression, that the number of checks carried out has increased dramatically and so have the number of contraventions established.

Mr Bérenger: M. le président, je veux vous demander de me permettre de poser une question supplémentaire un peu spéciale. Vous me permettez au nom de l'opposition de saluer la présence du Premier ministre Raffarin dans la Chambre. The Prime Minister seems to indicate

that if we have one authority *le paradis va descendre sur terre*. We have one gambling authority and we are in a terrible mess. Therefore, I don't think that the problem is one authority; it is the staffing and the people who are appointed at the head of such authorities. Will the Prime Minister agree?

The Prime Minister: That is partly also true, Mr Speaker, Sir. Je n'ai pas dit que cela va trouver des réponses à tous les problèmes. But the problem is, if you want me to put it bluntly - I know the Leader of the Opposition who has been former Prime Minister knows it - when you have too many authorities, you have X who knows Y, Y who knows Z, Z will phone the Minister, the Minister phones X and this is where the problem lies. I want to have it more centrally, speak to the stakeholders, but we have to ensure that the laws of Mauritius are understood and they are complied with.

Mr Bhagwan: We are not here to blame the Police, but we are all MPs with the experience we have had in the field. Is the Prime Minister aware that instructions must be given to the Police – *l'exemple doit venir d'en haut*? We have seen and we see on many occasions Police vehicles parking near restaurants or bars and even the Police officers are consuming alcohol.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is not living in Mauritius, but outside Mauritius!

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Prime Minister to give directives to the Commissioner of Police to be tough with Police Officers who park their vehicle in front of restaurants and also consume alcohol? This is happening.

The Prime Minister: In fact, that is one of the reasons why we see the delay in the final promotion that is taking place. We are well aware of this, but not all. You know you have one bad apple and not every policeman is like this, but you do have black sheep, even among us there are black sheep. We are aware of this, and this is why we are looking at a long term approach. That is why we see the delay as well.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of what the hon. Prime Minister just said and particularly his intention to review the actual application procedure, will he consider freezing the present applications which have been submitted till he finds a new mechanism?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, I have given instructions to the acting Commissioner of Police and the MRA - I don't know whether they have got it yet or not - to try to see whether they can freeze it. We are looking at the legality of it also, and from then on we will have the changes.

ROAD ACCIDENTS –CASES

(No. 1B/527) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since the beginning of the year to date, indicating the -

- (a) number of fatal cases thereof, and
- (b) additional measures that will be taken, if any, to reduce the death toll resulting therefrom.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, since the beginning of the year, up to 06 November 2010, 5,654 cases of road accidents have been reported to the Police, of which 123 were fatal.

As for part (b), I am informed that a number of measures have already been taken to address the issue of fatal accidents by the Traffic Branch of the Police, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping and the Road Safety Management Unit -

- (i) the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the Traffic Branch have intensified their education and sensitisation campaigns by targeting those categories of road users who are considered to be more at risk, namely pedestrians, auto/motorcyclists, senior citizens, as well as schoolchildren. Those campaigns are carried out through the media, pictorial boards placed at vulnerable spots across the island, lectures and talks conducted in primary and secondary

schools, also at youth centres and community centres, and specific sectors such as sugar factories, which employ a number of drivers, firms which employ motorcyclists for delivery, and public transport companies; the police are reinforcing their enforcement activities, which include checking of vehicles, preventive patrols, alcohol breath tests and regular speed checks;

- (ii) they are also doing regular snap road blocks, and stop and search operations are carried out at strategic points, especially at night, involving officers of the Traffic Branch, the Special Support Unit, the Special Mobile Force, the Emergency Response Service and the regular Police;
- (iii) three additional speed cameras – two fixed and one mobile – have been purchased by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, and will be operational by the end of November of this year, I believe. Provision is also being made for the procurement of six additional fixed cameras next year, and
- (iv) the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 provides that all motor vehicles will soon have to display white retro-reflective registration plates at the front and yellow retro-reflective ones at the rear. The Road Traffic Regulations have already been made. This measure will come into force early next year and will enhance visibility of vehicles and their number plates, especially during darkness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is adopting an integrated approach to deal with the problem of road safety, and our priority is to have an effective road safety management team. It is in this context that a special Road Safety Management Unit has been set up under the aegis of my office in November last year. This unit has the role of coordinating all road safety activities, and it is currently finalising a National Road Safety Strategy entitled “Preventing Road Injuries and Saving Lives”. This is aimed at reducing the number of deaths and injuries on our roads.

Emphasis is also being laid on the need to review the way people learn to drive. In this connection, the Road Safety Management Unit is working, in consultation with all the stakeholders, on a project for the setting up of a Driver Education and Training Centre, with the objective of improving the driving competencies of drivers.

The legal framework is also being reviewed to address the issue of road safety. In this context, amendments to the Road Traffic Act are being worked out for the introduction of a penalty point system, under which road traffic offenders will be sanctioned not only by fines but also by penalty points, which may lead to disqualification of the license of a driver. A probationary driving license scheme will also be introduced. This has been introduced in some countries in the world. The draft Bill is currently being finalised by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General and other stakeholders.

Mr Bérenger: The Prime Minister has given us a long list of measures that have been taken or are going to be taken to improve road safety. We have gone back *sur les vitres teintées*, and there is no way that this does not add to problems. You don't see through the car when you are looking at other cars coming and so on. In the name of road safety, why did Government backpedal on that?

The Prime Minister: I can explain that, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I know a bit about this. For *les vitres teintées*, it's more tinted at the back than in the front. You can actually see. You have to cut ultraviolet light as much as you can. It's not the real tinted one that we used to have. We have gone on the same degree of window tinting as they do in Europe, because there would have been a problem otherwise. They are putting this kind of windows; here we have tried to put a different degree of allowance of sunrays inside, and it would have been a problem. It would have meant changing all the windows in all the cars. That is the reason. But we are not departing from the European standard.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Prime Minister's answer, I heard that there will be more cameras installed. Would he agree that the idea of having cameras is not only to catch people who are speeding, but to raise revenue? The idea is also to inform people that this area is controlled, so that they will not speed. Are we going to have signs in those areas as we have in many countries, informing people that there are cameras, this is a controlled area so that they will not speed in that area, instead of people hiding behind a tree with their camera?

The Prime Minister: In fact, there is a debate. I know there is a debate about this in the UK. I am of the view that we should have this warning, because the whole idea, at the end of the day, is to stop them speeding. So, it will achieve its purpose.

Mrs Radegonde: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to table a copy of the number of fatal cases, their causes, by age group and gender as well, and the places where they are most occurred?

The Prime Minister: I would gladly do this, Mr Speaker, Sir, although I don't have it with me at the moment.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been apprised of a number of cases or percentage of accidents which has occurred at night, and whether there is a question of poor lighting at the places where these cases happened?

The Prime Minister: One of the reasons we are putting these reflective lights, that is, the white ones in front and the yellow ones at the back, is precisely because sometimes we have cases of hit and run, and it is not properly lit. It is very difficult to read the number plates that we have, and that is one of the reasons why we are doing this. There has been a slight delay, because there is a problem about what standard we will use. As far as possible, we are trying to put light in as many places as we can.

Ms Deerpalsing: The hon. Prime Minister has announced many measures to come. In those measures to come, would the police consider, when people have been convicted of being guilty for accidents, as they do in the UK, Canada and elsewhere, that people are called at the police for remedial courses? Would that be an option like they follow some interactive courses on the computer to sensitise them about the way they drive?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think that is one of the things that we are looking at. I believe the special advisers are looking at this, that is, to make them aware of the errors they made and to resensitise them on the problem of driving as they are.

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Dans le cas des accidents routiers, je voudrais demander au Premier ministre si les normes internationales sont respectées lors de l'aménagement des routes.

The Prime Minister: I thought the hon. Member was going to ask about the international normal driving standard, because it is not. The answer is no. I met COLAS, because we want to make sure that roads are built on the same standard. There is an important French company which is getting more and more contracts, because actually they are delivering and they are giving us good roads, to the level that we expect for a country like Mauritius.

CITE BEAU VALLON & CITÉ TOLE - DRUG ADDICTS

(No. 1B/528) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Cité Beau Vallon and Cité Tôle, in the region of Mahebourg, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an increase in the number of drug addicts thereat has been observed and if so, the measures that will be taken to –

- (a) prevent the proliferation of drugs thereat, and
- (b) ensure the security of the residents thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for quite some time now Cité Beau Vallon and Cité Tôle have been known to be drug problem areas.

Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) has taken several concrete measures to combat the drug problem in these areas. These measures include -

- (i) the mapping of the area with relevant intelligence inputs, from stop and search operations to searching of dwelling of houses, and
- (ii) sensitisation and awareness campaigns regarding the ill-effects of substance abuse and related problems in primary and secondary schools; factories and other workplaces; community centres; and youth and sports clubs in the area of Mahebourg which includes Cité Beau Vallon and Cité Tôle. This programme is carried out jointly by the Crime Prevention Unit and the local Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is also continuing with the implementation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme 1 as well as the Needle Exchange Programme in the region of Mahebourg in collaboration with the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA) and the NGOs to minimise the transmission of HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users and to reduce the criminal activities

among them. Furthermore, a Methadone Day Care Clinic is now fully operational in Mahebourg since September 2009, for a follow up of the drug addiction cases.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the areas of Cité Beau Vallon and Cité Tôle are policed by the Mahebourg Police Station, the Emergency Response Service (ERS), the CID and other units of the Police Force. Regular patrols are maintained and these units have increased vigilance in the region in order to enhance the security of the inhabitants.

Mr Seeruttun: Compte tenue de la situation dans cette région, est-ce que je pourrais demander à l'honorable Premier ministre, vu qu'il y a trois établissements scolaires dans cette région, une école primaire et deux collèges secondaires, qu'il y ait une présence policière plus accrue pendant les heures de classes pour que les élèves ne soient pas en contact avec ces drogués ou ces trafiquants ?

The Prime Minister: C'est exactement ce que je viens de répondre. La Police est en train d'augmenter les effectifs dans ces régions.

RODRIGUES - PORT MATHURIN - POLLING STATION

(No. 1B/529) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the local region No. 5, Port Mathurin, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Electoral Supervisory Commission, information as to if consideration will be given for the setting up of a new polling station either at the Mont Lubin College or at the Mont Lubin (Araucaria) Primary School and if so, the details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Electoral Commissioner that two polling stations, that is, Basile Allas Government School and Terre Rouge Government School are being used for local region No. 5, Port Mathurin, in Constituency No 21 – Rodrigues.

There have been representations on the hardship faced by electors in view of the fact that many electors have to travel a long distance passing through the locality of Mont Lubin to cast their votes at Terre Rouge Government School. The Electoral Commissioner has studied the problem and consideration is being given, I understand, to the setting up of a third polling station in that local region, most likely at the Mont Lubin College.

It is expected that some 1,200 electors in the regions of Morico, Mt. Goyave, Camp Baptiste and Sygangue will eventually be casting their votes in the proposed polling station.

**RODRIGUES - EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE & TERRITORIAL WATERS -
SURVEILLANCE**

(No. 1B/530) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the surveillance of our Exclusive Economic Zone and territorial waters and of the search and rescue operations around Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the mechanisms put in place in Rodrigues therefor, if any, and if not, state the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that surveillance of our Exclusive Economic Zone and our territorial waters around Rodrigues is carried out at three levels -

- (i) along the shore line within the lagoons;
- (ii) outside the lagoons up to 10 km from the coast, and
- (iii) in the high seas around Rodrigues.

Surveillance within the lagoons and outside the lagoons up to 10 km from the coast of Rodrigues is carried out by the National Coast Guard Post at Pointe Monier in Rodrigues, which is equipped with two heavy duty boats, two inflatable crafts and one rigid hull inflatable boat. The Post also has a Diving Unit which is available for rapid intervention around the island.

In order to ensure more effective surveillance around the island, a second National Coast Guard Post will be constructed at Rivière Coco. A plot of land has already been identified for that purpose and the designs are currently being worked out.

Regarding surveillance in the high seas around Rodrigues, operations are carried out by the National Coast Guard from mainland in Mauritius. Regular maritime aircraft patrols are carried out by the aircrafts of the National Coast Guard around Rodrigues. Search and rescue operations in Rodrigues are coordinated through the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre based in the National Coast Guard Operations Room in Mauritius. This Centre has the necessary communication and other equipment to undertake such tasks.

Besides, for operations in the high seas, the support of neighbouring countries such as Reunion Island and Seychelles is also enlisted as and when required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to reinforcing the operational capacity of the National Coast Guard in Rodrigues, the Police is currently implementing a project for the setting up of a Coastal Surveillance Radar System at Montagne Malartic in Rodrigues. The foundation works for the erection of the Radar tower is nearing completion and the tower itself is expected to arrive from India this month.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME – DRUG USERS – ARREST

(No. 1B/531) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he is aware that some drug users who participate in the Needle Exchange Programme have been arrested by the ADSU officers and prosecuted for being in possession of needles and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof and if inquiries have been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at to date, there has been no arrest for possession of syringe against drug users who participate in the Needle Exchange Programme which is being carried out at 46 sites across the country.

However, regular Police patrols are effected for security reasons, specially following requests from inhabitants staying in the close vicinity of the sites where the Needle Exchange Programme is being implemented.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le Premier ministre peut-il nous dire si les officiers de l'ADSU sont au courant du protocole mis en place dans le cas du programme d'échange de seringue et aussi de son fonctionnement ?

The Prime Minister: I have asked the question, the answer is yes. In fact, I know why the question has been asked, people have been stopped and searched, and this because they have also a duty to the rest of the communities. There have been complaints, but nobody has been arrested.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has looked into the fact that it seems there is a contradiction between two pieces of legislation? Therefore, under one piece of

legislation ADSU has to act, whereas on another piece of legislation they are not supposed to act, because it is part of the scheme. Has he looked into that and, if not, will he look into it, whether the law does not need to be amended to harmonise things?

The Prime Minister: My understanding was that the law was amended, but I will look into it. The problem is whether ADSU can actually refrain, because then you might have other people who are not concerned with this.

Mr Quirin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would be grateful if the hon. Prime Minister could indicate whether he would be agreeable to have the Needle Exchange Programme revisited at the risk of even including the ADSU on board and other stakeholders so that we do not end up having any mishaps on the actual philosophy behind this programme? It is a long time since this programme has been on and there has been no change in the philosophy of it.

The Prime Minister: By ‘no change’, I suppose the hon. Member mean that other people are complaining. These people want to keep some anonymity as well and I don’t know if they would be agreeable for ADSU officers coming in. They might not agree, but I can ask the Commissioner of Police to look into this.

Mr Bhagwan: *Je fais un appel au Premier ministre. Il y a beaucoup d’ONG, surtout des dames dans les quartiers à risques, qui sont engagées dans ce Needle Exchange Programme.* The way the ADSU officers act – we all have friends, even in the Police – especially with ladies, this is where the problem lies. We have one particular case at Cité Barkly where the women associations of the region are engaged in that Needle Exchange Programme and they feel that they are harassed. I, myself, as MP have spoken to the Senior Officer of ADSU. There should be a regular meeting with the high officials of the Police Station of the division concerned with these people and also with the help of the NGOs.

The Prime Minister: Just to clarify - does the hon. Member mean with the NGOs?

Mr Bhagwan: With the NGOs.

The Prime Minister: Yes, in that sense; then we can look at it.

SOUTH AFRICAN DETAINEE, J. V. – DEATH

(No. 1B/532) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to

the South African detainee, J. V., who passed away, on or about 12 August 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to –

- (a) when he started complaining of health problems, and
- (b) the treatments which were administered to him.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that detainee J. V., a South African national, aged 31, was admitted on remand to the Beau Bassin Central Prison on 02 April 2008. He was on 02 April 2010 sentenced before the Supreme Court to undergo 34 years penal servitude for the offence of “*Importation of Heroin and Trafficking*”.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons as follows -

- On 23 April 2008, the detainee complained of joint pain and anti-inflammatory tablets were prescribed for five days by the Prison Medical Officer.
- On five occasions, i.e., on 07 May 2008, 14 May 2008, 21 May 2008, 09 July 2008 and 23 July 2008, he was treated for dental problems.
- On 19 August 2008, he got a nail prick on the left foot. Anti-tetanic injection, dressing and analgesic were prescribed by the Prison Medical Officer. Antibiotics were added to above treatment on 20 August 2008.
- On 02 October 2008, he was examined by the Prison Medical Officer for infection on the left foot. He was prescribed antibiotics for five days and the wound was cleaned and dressing done on a daily basis.
- On 06 November 2009, he complained of sore throat and was examined by the Prison Medical Officer and was prescribed anti-histaminic and anti-inflammatory tablets for five days.

On 09 August 2010, the detainee complained of fever and difficulty in breathing. He was treated for an upper respiratory tract infection accordingly by the Prison Medical Officer.

The next day, the detainee complained of spitting blood and was referred by Prison Medical Officer to the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for further treatment. He was admitted in the Detainees Ward and was treated for pneumonia.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that he was given appropriate treatment on admission at the hospital, and on 11 August 2010, he was seen by the Chest Physician.

The detainee unfortunately collapsed at 23.00 hrs on the same day and despite resuscitation measures, passed away at around 23.25 hrs.

On 15 August 2010, a post-mortem examination was carried out by the Chief Police Medical Officer who concluded that the death was due to “Acute Pulmonary Oedema”.

Police is carrying out an enquiry into the matter and will forward its findings to the DPP.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, some months back, in May, I put a question regarding how a detainee passed away in prison and nearly the same history was given. The then Ag. Prime Minister said that he had asked a consultant to view the notes as to whether proper treatment was given. They both started with pains and go on finishing with spitting blood and it is the same thing. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will ask - as the Ag. Prime Minister did, I hope this was done - a consultant to look at these notes and say whether this case was properly handled - I take the words of the Ag. Prime Minister - and whether we can draw a parallel between these two deaths because it is so similar?

The Prime Minister: As a matter of fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, an enquiry is being completed by the Police and the filing is sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. He will decide. In such cases, he usually asks for a judicial enquiry, but I don't want to have the presumption of saying what he will do. But normally, this is what happens.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, with due respect, whether that patient was HIV/AIDS tested?

The Prime Minister: According to the records, he was tested and found to be negative.

Dr. S. Boolell: In view of the increasing degree of suspicion and alleged negligence attached to both deaths in penitentiary institutions, would the hon. Prime Minister consider that a fast track enquiry be conducted by a body independent of the Police and independent of the Police authorities and that a report on this death and other deaths in penitentiary institutions be forwarded to the family of the deceased to avoid any unfounded or founded allegations because

the problem that we have with the judicial enquiry would be that it takes too long, Mr Speaker, Sir?

The Prime Minister: But if a judicial enquiry is asked by the DPP, he will, of course, have the advice of consultants or whatever to look at everything. But whether we can do it faster than that, I will ask the question. But I must point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, there have not been so many deaths, as if we are making it a problem. In fact, I see there have not been many deaths of foreign nationals in our prisons, but there have been some.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, that was exactly the question I was going to ask the hon. Prime Minister. We are talking of a case dating back to August this year. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that subsequent to that death, three other prisoners are suspected to have died from HIV in the prisons?

The Prime Minister: Well, if there are HIV positive, even if the treatment has progressed a lot, these risks exist.

Mr Ganoo: Can I have the number of deaths since August?

The Prime Minister: I cannot confirm whether there were HIV positive or not because I don't have these figures.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he believes that the Human Rights Commission which, according to me, lacks a little bit of work, could be called upon to look into these deaths?

The Prime Minister: In fact, there was a question. We are reviewing the whole structure of this and they have, in fact, lots of work, but they will also be involved.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security has informed me that he has to attend to the funeral of a close relative and has requested me to allow him to answer the only question that is addressed to him out of turn and I have accepted his request.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES - PESTICIDES

(No. 1B/570) **Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the need to ensuring that consumption of fruits and vegetables does not constitute a health threat to the public, he will

state if sample surveys of local and imported products have been carried out to determine the level of pesticide deposits and if so, indicate -

- (a) the results thereof, and
- (b) if Government will consider -
 - (i) reinforcing measures to limit the use of pesticides in the local production of fruits and vegetables, and
 - (ii) introducing new measures to encourage the production and marketing of organic products.

Mr Faugoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has been closely monitoring the issue of pesticides residue on fruits and vegetables as per the guidelines of FAO and WHO. Some 30 different pesticides (insecticides and fungicides) are commonly used by local producers to protect their crops against pests and diseases because of their efficacy.

Acceptable levels of pesticide residues for different types of chemicals applied to different crops have been established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission of the (FAO and WHO). These levels are commonly referred to as the Codex Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). It is to be noted that these Maximum Residue Limits are not a toxicity level *per se* but only an indication that Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) have been observed and that the product is safe for consumption and does not expose consumers to health hazards.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the practice for the past 20 years had been to conduct “Market Basket Surveys” for analysis of pesticide residues of vegetables and fruits. Samples were collected from different markets at random once or twice monthly. Statistics show that over period 2007-2009, some 187 samples were collected and analysed yearly. Moreover, 5% of the total samples were found to contain pesticides above the Maximum Residue Limits. The system in place, however, could not trace back the origin of the samples as they were collected at the market.

With regard to part (b) (i), Mr Speaker Sir, the House may wish to note that at the Cabinet Meeting last year, in fact in September 2009, Government, conscious of the health hazards related to pesticide residues, took the decision to reinforce the monitoring system of pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits.

Accordingly, a new monitoring system was put in place in January 2010 in order to mitigate possible adverse effects on consumer health. Over the last 9 months, 260 samples have been collected and analysed, thus representing a more than twofold increase in the number of samples being collected and analysed. Moreover, my Ministry implemented a series of complementary measures namely –

- (i) Reviewing the sampling procedure. Sampling is now undertaken at the farm gate level instead of the market. Hence, a system of traceability has been put in place, whereby planters whose products exceed the Maximum Residue Limit can be traced back, warned and trained for good agricultural practices and a more judicious pesticide use. Since the operation of the new system, results of the 260 samples analysed show that 8 exceeded the Maximum Residue Limit, that is, 3% compared to 5% previously. The eight planters have been identified and are being closely monitored and tendered relevant advice.
- (ii) A structured sampling procedure is now in place whereby samples for analysis are collected by AREU for all vegetables and fruits grown in a particular month across the island.
- (iii) The monitoring has been extended to more crops. Over the 3 year period prior to the new monitoring system, some 15 crops were covered. With the revised system, samples of some 25 crops are now being collected and analysed.
- (iv) The range of pesticides analysed has also been extended. Before 2009, 13 pesticides had been analysed and as at date, some 20 of the 30 commonly in use are being analysed. With the increased capability of the Food Technology Laboratory, all the commonly used pesticides will be covered.
- (v) AREU has been reorganised to conduct aggressive sensitisation campaigns and training on good pesticide management. The latter has, since January 2010, conducted 35 training sessions with some 2,500 planters on judicious use of pesticides, in particular, on observance of safety period prior to harvest. Also some 6500 field visits have been effected by AREU to disseminate information on proper use and handling of pesticides.
- (vi) Through the *Programme Régional de Protection des Végétaux* (PRPV), under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Commission, the laboratory capacity for chemical analysis

of pesticide residues has been strengthened. My Ministry has in April this year purchased a latest liquid chromatography equipment to the tune of Rs14 m. for analysis of a wider range of pesticide. Furthermore, the services of a laboratory in South Africa have been enlisted to validate results of local analysis. We have, in fact, so far, for the first time, sent eight samples for residue analysis to South Africa and only one of them was found to contain above the maximum residue level.

My Ministry is also encouraging planters to adopt Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system to limit the use of chemical pesticides. We are also promoting vegetable planters to adopt protected production systems like hydroponics, sheltered farming technology and insect proof tunnels.

As regards part (b)...

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Minister has given sufficient information. May I request the hon. Minister to circulate his answer as it is too long.

Mr Faugoo: If my friend has no objection, but it is nearly over, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister can circulate the answer.

Mr Faugoo: Yes, but it is nearly over. As regard part (b)(ii) of the question, my Ministry has initiated a series of measures to encourage the production and marketing of organic products. However, the production of organic products is complex and requires certification from an approved certification body.

With respect to imported fruits and vegetables, my Ministry is more involved with phytosanitary issues. The quality issue is looked after by the Health inspectorate of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: A comprehensive answer .

Mr Obeegadoo: It was a long answer which, I hope, will entitle me to a few supplementary questions, at least, Mr Speaker. We have had a long answer concerning the monitoring by the technical services of the Ministry, but has the Minister been made aware of the amount of pesticides reportedly used, something like 1200 tonnes a year? Has the hon. Minister been made aware of the statistics from the Ministry of Health concerning the number of cases of poisoning due to pesticides, the difficulty to explain the increase in the number of different forms of cancer and, most importantly, has the Minister been made aware of statements by his

colleague, the Minister for higher education, who was formerly the Minister of Health, that we are one of the most important users of pesticides in the whole wide world and that the problem is serious and needs to be urgently addressed?

Mr Faugoo: I am aware of all the issues raised by my learned colleague, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is why Government, conscious of those facts, took a decision last year, in September, to review whatever procedure and policy exist and we are working on it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from reviewing the monitoring procedures, would the Minister agree that the phytosanitary norms applicable in Mauritius right now are not to European standards for instance, and that there is an urgent need to review the regulatory framework and norms set and beyond that, to spell out a national food security strategy which would imply more laboratories and inspectors to urgently address what is clearly a very dramatic problem faced by us?

Mr Faugoo: I am in total agreement with my friend and so is the Prime Minister. In fact, he is personally concerned of the fact, especially as 11% of death in Mauritius is due to cancer, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, this is a serious concern and a national issue and we are working on it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer the hon. Minister has said that when the monitoring is done, the planters are sensitised about the safety period before harvest. There can be a safety period, but what if they have used tonnes of pesticides before the safety period? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether over and above that safety period the planters would be sensitised to using, before the safety period, the right amount, or even to go with the international trend where people are looking for organic food everywhere. Would that be taken into consideration?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, they are not only sensitised on the effects of pesticides residue but also on the judicious use, the interval and on the effects on the environment. Over and above, it is a health hazard for the person who is using pesticide as he is exposing himself to health hazard and at the end of the day, the consumers.

Mr François: As this is a national issue, with regards to vegetables, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether sample analysis is extended to Rodrigues with the help of the

Commission for Agriculture and its frequency thereof as there are no laboratories for that purpose in Rodrigues?

Mr Faugoo: I did not get the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Could the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

Mr François: Whether the sample analysis is extended to Rodrigues with the help of the Commission for Agriculture and its frequency thereof as there are no laboratories in Rodrigues for that purpose?

Mr Faugoo: I do not have the relevant information.

Mr Speaker: A last question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am very concerned that my questions pertaining to our norms not being up to the European standards and as to the issue of a national food security strategy was not answered by the Minister, but be that as it may, the Minister must be aware that recently there has been a Nutrition/Education month launched by the Minister of Health which was not very effective by the way...

(Interruptions)

Being given that in the course of that campaign, I have heard nothing about sensitising the public and students as necessary and appropriate about the washing of fruits and vegetables...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, I am sorry, the question should be addressed to the Minister whose Ministry carried out the workshop.

Mr Obeegadoo: This is why I asked for a national food security strategy and I hope that I have the attention of the Prime Minister. Can the Minister tell us as a matter of fact whether there was any consultation between the two Ministries so that in the course of that campaign issues like proper washing of vegetables and fruits are attended to?

Mr Faugoo: I do not know about the details of the campaign, but there was even consultation on the campaign before I came to the House to answer this question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: To no effect manifestly! My last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Hon. Ms Deerpalsing raised the issue of organic produce, what about organic pesticides? There has been a suggestion that we now go for organic pesticides which might be one of the strategies to address the problem. Will the hon. Minister tell us whether he is looking into that?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, AREU is collaborating with a foreign company settled here called Aadicon and this company is producing organic pesticides, Mr Speaker, Sir. But this is an initiative and we are going to work on it.

Mr Speaker: As it is a national problem, I will allow a last question from hon. Ms Deerpalsing.

Ms Deerpalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Just following up from the question from hon. Obeegadoo in terms of organic pesticides, would the hon. Minister look towards India where they use neem as pesticide?

Mr Faugoo: I will surely do that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At 1.11 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.48 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

PRIVATE SECTOR - RETIREMENT AGE

(No. 1B/544) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if Government proposes to extend the decision to raise the retirement age to 65 to the private sector.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for his question. As regards the retirement age in the private sector, this has already been gradually increased to 65 years.

In fact, following an amendment brought, in July 2008, to Section 34 of the then Labour Act by Section 17 of the Finance Act 2008, the retirement age in the private sector had gradually been increased from 60 to 65 years over a period of ten years starting in August 2008.

On the repeal of the Labour Act in February 2009, the same provisions regarding retirement age have been included in the Employment Rights Act 2008.

However, there is a sector – I must admit that concerning the Sugar Industry specifically that is governed by the Remuneration Orders – where the Remuneration Orders provide for conditions of employment in that particular industry for the retirement age to be 60 years. This Remuneration Order covers the agricultural and non-agricultural workers.

It does not cover those in Management. Those in Management go under the Employment Rights Act of 2008. Action is being initiated at the very moment to provide for amendments to the Employment Rights Act for retirement age to be increased gradually to 65 years in the Sugar Industry.

CRIMINAL CASES - MEDIATION

(No. 1B/545) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the provisional charges in criminal cases of assault, he will state if Government will consider introducing mediation as a compulsory procedure between the opposing parties, with a view to reaching a consensus or agreement not to proceed further with the matter before the formal stage is reached, for a more efficient use of the time of the courts.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE that I am informed in cases of simple assault, provisional charges are not usually lodged by the Police.

However, I wish to emphasise that within the Mauritian context, a criminal matter is a question “*d’ordre public*”. This means that it is not a matter between the parties, but the State has a say in it through institutions such as the Police, the DPP and the Court.

Therefore, being given the current constitutional powers vested upon the DPP in relation to both the institution and discontinuance, at any stage, of criminal proceedings, and taking into account the makeover of our criminal justice system, it would not be appropriate to introduce mediation in criminal matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is also questionable whether it would be a good thing to compel a person who has been the victim of an assault to be confronted with the offender, be it for mediation purposes.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for purposes of cases of assault which are connected between complainants and accused parties, would the Attorney-General consider such cases before the formal stage in the event that they wish to bring the matter to a consensus or to an agreement?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the practice is, normally if parties do not wish to proceed with a matter where there are many connected cases, they usually go to the police and give a statement, following which, normally, there is an inquiry which is carried out and then, if necessary, the Probation Office also is involved in that process. But that is currently being done.

COURTS –FEES

(No. 1B/546) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to provisional charges being struck out before the criminal courts, he will state if Government proposes to legislate to make provision for the reimbursement of all court fees disbursed by the accused party.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the payment of fees before our Courts is governed by the Legal Fees and Cost Rules 2000, which have been made under section 198 of the Courts Act. Court fees, which are administrative in nature, in relation to the release of a person on bail, are nominal and do not, in practice, exceed Rs500. These fees are necessary to meet the costs of processing administrative matters. When a provisional information or charge is struck out, a refund of the security paid by the accused party or on behalf of an accused party is made.

Section 85 of the District and Intermediate Court (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act provides a mechanism, which may be used by a detainee to move the Court to exempt a detainee from the payment of any fee payable in respect of any proceedings before the District Magistrate.

It is, therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not necessary for Government to consider bringing in legislation to cater for the issue raised by the hon. Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE.

Mr Seetaram: Would the hon. Minister consider the recent developments which have taken place recently concerning the case of falcon radar where such mechanism was used? As per the recent judgement, it has been found that such was unlawful, inasmuch as it was not legislated for the mechanism to be used.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Member should come with a specific question on that issue as it is not related to the main question. We move on to the next question.

LIQUOR & ALCOHOLIC PRODUCTS – RETAILERS - LICENCES

(No. 1B/547) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the licences of retailer of liquor and alcoholic products for on and off premises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, in each case, information as to the -

- (a) number thereof that have been issued on a yearly basis over the last five years, and
- (b) average number of new applications received for the issue therefor per month.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Mauritius Revenue Authority as follows -

The number of licences of retailer of liquor and alcoholic products for on and off premises issued for the last five years are as follows -

2006	194
2007	191
2008	299
2009	296
2010	329

On average, 50 applications for all categories of liquor licences are received monthly, and some 35 applications are approved monthly. I am circulating a table showing the total number of liquor licenses issued over the past five years, including licenses issued to retailers of liquor and alcoholic products for on and off premises.

However, for the information of the Member and the House, I wish to draw attention on the worrying fact that there is today in our country one liquor outlet for every 150 adults. The total number of liquor licenses issued during the last five years stands at 435. Moreover, the total number of licenses issued as at date is 5,839.

I can assure the hon. Member and the House that the Prime Minister - he even replied to an earlier question – myself, and the whole Government as such are determined to spearhead a national battle to curb down the devastating effects of alcoholism in our society. Courageous and far reaching measures are, in fact, forthcoming, and we will not allow our society, especially our youth, to get drowned in alcoholism.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance what are the criteria that are generally used for the MRA to issue these licences, in particular with regard to population density? *Ce sont des chiffres éffarants* - one outlet for 150 adults in Mauritius. This is absolutely outrageous. When we ask for a community centre or a health centre to be added to *des quartiers*, we are told that the population density is too low. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the MRA uses population density as criteria. For these, we don't ask population density, but for a health care centre or a community centre, we are told the population density is too low.

Mr Jugnauth: I have just said that, in fact, this is governed by the Excise Act of 1994, and we are in the process of reviewing such criteria. In fact, just to refer to what the hon. Prime Minister has stated earlier, directives have been given to the MRA so that we look at each application on a real case to case basis and, generally speaking, we will be very careful in granting new licenses. But I cannot say that we are going to freeze everything, because in certain cases there might be a justification for granting such a licence. For example, if there is a hotel or a restaurant, then there would be a need. It also depends on the case, but generally we should try to freeze, so that there is no new liquor licences given where there already exists a number per head, as we mentioned.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are all grateful for the answer that the Prime Minister gave this morning, so that we can curb this scourge. Given the figure that the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has given, can I know whether, when these retail licences expire, they will be reviewed, according to the answer that the Prime Minister has

given? Because 150 adults for one outlet is really a worrying figure. I think the MRA does a survey. For example, in La Source, in three roads, there are more than a dozen. Can the MRA conduct a survey and give priority to particular areas where the density of these outlets is even higher, and not renew the licences coming to expiration?

Mr Jugnauth: I agree with the concern of the hon. Member and, even before a question came to Parliament, I can assure the hon. Member that we are working on a number of issues. Of course, I don't want, at this stage, to tell the House, but there is a Budget that is coming; there is a number of measures that we are going to take, and the hon. Members in the House can rest assured that we are looking into this matter. It is a matter for concern; we are not really happy at all with the fact that there is one outlet for 150 adults in Mauritius and, of course, there are areas also where there are, in fact, too many outlets.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will not this new proposal of issuing licences on a case to case basis discriminate in favour of the big outlets like the new department stores, the big restaurants and the big hotels, which will be able to sell by heavy marketing more liquor than we would want the situation to be?

Mr Jugnauth: We have got different views but, of course, we have to look into each case, as I say. There is going to be a general approach with regard to this problem. There is a problem, but that will be taken into consideration and we will see to it that there is also fairness in measures that we take.

(Interruptions)

No, we will look in all directions.

PLACE JULES KOENIG, QUATRE BORNES - BUS STATION – NTA CHECKS

(No. 1B/548) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the main bus station at the Place Jules Koenig, Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if –

- (a) regular checks on site are carried out thereat by inspectors, and
- (b) consideration will be given for a review of the layout thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that regular checks are carried out on site which comprise amongst others, observance of time tables, road worthiness of buses, provision of school services, early morning and late hour services. Contraventions are established against defaulters and disciplinary actions taken against the bus crew for major offences.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that it will be difficult to review the layout of the bus station due to limited space. However, the House would wish to note that based on the layout designed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and on the requirements of the National Transport Authority, the bus station was upgraded in the year 2007 by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister how many contraventions were issued to those who have not been adhering to the condition?

Mr Bachoo: This year, from January up till now, 168 checks and 122 contraventions have been established. Last year, it was 162 contraventions and the year before it was 198 contraventions.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that - at least, I see it with my own eyes - especially when the traffic is high in that corner of Quatre Bornes, every Saturday individual buses are just standing on the yellow line and I, myself, have called the Police a number of times. These individual buses keep stations on the road instead of being on *la gare*. I would like to know whether contraventions have been taken on these individual bus owners who park the buses where they are supposed to be moving?

Mr Bachoo: That concerns a question of enforcement of law also, and I think that out of the 122 contraventions those contraventions must have been included in that. I am going to request NTA and also the Police authorities to, at least, try to intensify the checks which are being carried out.

Ms Deerpalsing: With regard to the second part of the question, is the hon. Minister aware that the exit of buses - the way that the layout is - is directly facing the main gate of SSS Quatre Bornes? That represents a huge danger to the girls who come out at a time that school ends and when they have to manoeuvre through the roundabout and then exit right in front of the main gate of SSS Quatre Bornes. There is an accident waiting to happen. This is why I have

asked this question and I would like the hon. Minister - if he would be agreeable and I know he is always there to help - if he could, together with us and with hon. Duval, have a site visit so that we can review this site. I mean this is a serious issue there is an accident waiting to happen.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as early as next week we are going to conduct a site visit. I can assure the hon. Member that we will try to find a solution to this problem.

Mr Obeegadoo: Since we are meant to be in a Parliamentary democracy, my request to the hon. Minister is, if there is any site visit with a Member of Parliament, that the same should apply to another Member of Parliament even from the Opposition benches.

Mr Bachoo: Well, I do not have any problem. The hon. Member will get an opportunity to see the good works that we are doing.

RÉSIDENCE ST JEAN, QUATRE BORNES - DRAIN SYSTEM

(No. 1B/549) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Résidence St Jean, Quatre Bornes, he will state if consideration will be given for the carrying out of a complete study of the drain system found thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due consideration will be given to this proposal once sewerage works are over. I have already assured you of that.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been already a survey carried out?

Mr Bachoo: Yes. In fact, the officers of my Ministry are working on that and we are very impatient to start the work. Unfortunately, we are caught because of the sewerage work which is going on. Once it is over, work will start.

CLIMATE CHANGE - INITIATIVES

(No. 1B/550) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to climate change, he

will state the specific initiatives, in the short term and long term, that Government proposes to take to mitigate same.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, climate change is one of the ‘greatest challenges of our time’. As a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of this global threat. In fact, the adverse impacts of climate change can be a major barrier to the achievement of sustainable development goals and poses a risk to our country’s hard-won development gains. It is important to understand that efforts to combat climate change are mainly geared towards mitigation and adaptation actions.

With regard to mitigation, only developed countries have the legal obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to mitigate climate change through reduction of emission of green house gases. They are also required to support developing countries in such actions.

Nevertheless, addressing climate change has always been high on the agenda of this Government. We have taken a series of measures with our limited means to mitigate climate change.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to list some of the key initiatives which are either ongoing or planned for the near future -

- (i) the *Maurice Ile Durable* programme which also aims towards promoting sustainable development. Emphasis has been laid on increasing reliance on renewable energy, while aiming at decreasing importation and therefore reduction in the use of non renewable fossil fuel. The scope of the programme is being reviewed to cater for other initiatives to mitigate and to adapt to climate change;
- (ii) replacement of all street lighting with energy saving lamps over the next five years;
- (iii) replacement of incandescent bulbs with energy saving lamps. The target has been doubled from one million to two million lamps;
- (iv) incentives under the solar water heater scheme which has enabled 23,628 households to acquire solar water heaters in Mauritius and Rodrigues. This scheme will continue and target another 50,000 households in the coming years;

- (v) a Hydro Unit has been set up at La Nicolière and one is being envisaged at Midlands. Also, two wind parks of a total of about 30 mega watts, one at Curepipe Point and one at Plaine des Roches are envisaged by 2012;
- (vi) installation works on four wind turbines in Rodrigues is in process with two units already operational;
- (vii) development of a National Grid Code to enable CEB to purchase electricity from Small Independent Power Producers (SIPPs) that adhere to the democratisation programme of the Government and to the policy of promoting clean, renewable and local energy sources;
- (viii) Government will be working out a green performance framework for new and existing public buildings. This includes energy auditing of five major public buildings, 27 manufacturing establishments as well as 18 small and medium hotels and 14 restaurants, amongst others;
- (ix) to sustain our energy saving initiatives, an Energy Efficiency Bill which is being finalised will introduce a regulatory framework for labelling household electric appliances on the basis of their energy efficiency and give the Ministry of Renewable Energy the authority to impose carbon taxes on energy inefficient appliances. It also provides for the setting-up of the Energy Management Office;
- (x) we are seeking assistance from the French Government for the setting up of an observatory of climate change which will enable all stakeholders to take informed decision;
- (xi) the Land-Based Oceanic Industry will be a key contributor to generating energy savings as cold deep sea water will be used for air conditioning;
- (xii) implementation of major Road Decongestion Programme, and
- (xiii) planting of one million trees which act as sink to carbon dioxide, as well as maintenance of habitat.

My Ministry has also embarked on the implementation of an ECO-Village programme. It will be a multi-dimensional programme to revitalise our villages, sustain the livelihood of the communities and protect the ecological integrity of environmentally sensitive areas. This

programme will enhance both mitigation as well as adaptation to the impacts of climate change and target 9 villages in the next 4 years.

This Government also recognises the need for a paradigm shift thereby calling for a positive change in our mindset and our lifestyle to make them more sustainable, and enhance mitigation and adaptation to climate change. To this end, my Ministry has developed and is implementing a National Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production in collaboration with relative stakeholders.

Government is also putting a lot of emphasis on environmental education and sensitisation, with a view to sensitising the general public on climate change. While my Ministry is focussing on non-formal education

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Virahsawmy: It is a very important issue, I think you better listen. It is a global issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have to listen. They should learn what is happening.

With regard to adaptation measures, my Ministry is coordinating the implementation of the Africa Adaptation Programme - it is very good, listen to this - whose main objective is to integrate and mainstream climate change adaptation into the institutional framework and into core development policies, strategies and plans for the Republic of Mauritius. The Government of Japan has financed this project to the tune of Rs90 m. and will be completed by 2011.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to mainstreaming climate change in our development process, devising and coordinating execution of climate change measures in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, a Climate Change Division is already operational at my Ministry as from this year. Already a number of sectoral initiatives are under way. For example, initiatives under the Food Security Fund, coastal zone protection works, protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas, construction of additional dams, amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are leaving no stone unturned. We are also actively participating at international level through the Alliance of Small Island States, the Africa Group and the Group of G77 and China to make our voice heard and are pressing for a more ambitious

commitment by developed countries for reduction of green house gases at all levels, and also, to support vulnerable countries for enhanced mitigation, adaptation, capacity building, technology development and transfer, amongst others.

Ms Anquetil: Following the recent Copenhagen summit, can the hon. Minister confirm whether any decision was taken by some developed countries to contribute for funding of projects related to climate change?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a commitment from developed countries to contribute 30 billion euros, but, unfortunately, up to now not one cent has been contributed.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the Minister whether Mauritius has prepared and submitted its second national communication to the United Nations?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mauritius has prepared the second national communication to the United Nations.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House whether this document can be tabled in the Library of the National Assembly?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can table the document.

Mr Bhagwan: Another supplementary question, Sir. When we talk about climate change, the sea level also rises. Can the Minister inform the House whether his Ministry has a database for monitoring the sea level rise?

Mr Virahsawmy: This is under preparation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is very important that I inform the House that we have a major programme called Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme which takes into consideration the erosion and the effect of increase in sea level on all our coasts and beaches.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has elaborated on a lot of projects either ongoing or implemented to reduce the green house gases in the country and this has an incidence on climate change. Can we know whether on the projects that the Minister has

elaborated, Government has benefited from carbon credits under the carbon development mechanism?

Mr Virahsawmy: No, on the projects regarding to economical bulbs, the CEB is in the process of negotiating carbon credit.

Mr Bhagwan: The population still remembers the problem of flooding which occurred some years back in Mauritius. It is one of the consequences of climate change. Can the Minister inform the House whether Mauritius has prepared an inundation map and what concrete action is being taken with regard to flood prone areas and whether the Minister could circulate all the works effected following the last flooding?

Mr Virahsawmy: With regard to flooding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and National Development Unit which has a national plan and it is being taken care of. I speak under the correction of my colleague.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow two last questions, one from hon. Ganoo and one from hon. Seetaram.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister has mentioned the promotion of renewable energy as one of the factors to mitigate climate change and he has also mentioned in his answer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the national grid, treaties, that this grid code is essential for the operation of the small independent power producers and producers of renewable energy. Can he inform the House what is the situation so far because we have heard about the implementation of the grid code for a few years now in this House? Are we ready with the grid code? If this is not ready, we can't start the promotion of renewable energy. Where are we as far as the grid code is concerned?

Mr Virahsawmy: If the hon. Member had listened properly to my reply, I have mentioned that the grid code is being finalised and will be implemented very soon.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seetaram, last question!

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the initiatives, be it in the long-term or the short-term, to bring change in the actual scenario, that is, to put harsher conditions and to clamp down on heavy polluters, does the Minister propose to legislate same?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, we are looking at this major programme of pollution control and we will definitely come forward with the principle that polluters will have to pay and we are also sensitising all the different sectors of Mauritius to encourage the different organisations to control pollution. We are also having a scheme together with the Ministry of Education in all the schools and colleges to show to the children how to control pollution. We have implemented the project of segregation of waste in all primary schools and, very soon, we will introduce same in secondary schools.

RÉSIDENCE MON ROSE, ROSE BELLE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/551) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he is aware of the difficulties experienced by the residents of the Résidence Mon Rose at Balisson, Rose Belle, with regard to the supply of water and the poor state of the houses and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if remedial actions will be taken in relation thereto and if so, when.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that the residents of Mon Rose NHDC Housing Estate have effectively made representations in respect of irregular water supply and problems of water ingress in some of the housing units.

Actually, my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has been regularly on my back every Sunday morning about the same problems over the past six months or a year.

I wish to draw the attention of the House that, at the time the project was implemented in 2002, the CWA approved the design of the water reticulation networks and in view of the high water pressure in the area, did not advise the necessity of water tanks.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the difficulties presently being experienced by the residents of Mon Rose Housing Estate are also being faced by all inhabitants in the vicinity and throughout the island. The inhabitants of Mon Rose Housing Estate are owners *de plein droit* and as such they should look into the advisability of purchasing water tanks as is the case for all private house owners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the state of the houses, it is to be noted that further to complaints received from some residents, a survey was carried out by the NHDC in presence of the representatives of Mon Rose Housing Estates.

As owners of *plein droit*, again the residents are personally responsible for maintenance and repairs of their houses. However, in this respect, it has been noted that the residents of the NHDC housing estates have not assumed their responsibility fully.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a caring Government, we have at heart the interest of those who are at the lowest rung of the social ladder. Following a survey, the NHDC established priority wise a list of rehabilitation works to be carried out. These have been duly completed to the tune of Rs1.5 m.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether, when the work was carried out, it was being supervised by the members of the NHDC or, if not, would it be possible for the officers of the NHDC to carry out a survey there to see whether the work was carried out as it was meant to be?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, I, myself, have had complaints and I have ensured that the NHDC people have been going around. There were complaints about some of the work, they wanted the waterproofing to be carried out all over the housing estate which is not possible because this was going to cost Rs7.75 m and this was not earmarked. The House must realise that we have earmarked in the Budget, Rs285 m. for all the housing estates. That's why I said the work was surveyed on a form of priority and those that were damaged, especially the waterproofing, have been repaired. This again was due to the fact that the inhabitants have been putting television aerials where they shouldn't and have thereby damaged initially the waterproofing system.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL - HYDROTHERAPY TREATMENT

(No. 1B/552) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to hydrotherapy treatment which is presently being offered in the Victoria Hospital, she will state if consideration will be given for the extension of same to other hospitals.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in 2008 some 1090 patients underwent hydrotherapy treatment at Victoria Hospital whereas for the year

2009, the number of patients was 1127. An average of 125 patients islandwide undergo such treatment monthly.

As hydrotherapy is considered to be a pleasant mode of treatment for the rehabilitation of patients, I would have wished that such services be extended to all regional hospitals.

However, the implementation of such a project would involve considerable financial implications in terms of additional space, infrastructure and equipment as well as additional human resource.

Given that there are other alternative modes of treatment for the rehabilitation of patients, the extension of hydrotherapy services is not considered as a priority for the time being.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a supplementary. In line with the policy of regionalisation and in view of the fact that patients coming from the South or the North have a very long way to travel, especially when they suffer from backache and also the incidence of road accidents are on the high side, it creates lots of hardships. Therefore, towards alleviating this hardship - I am not asking for it necessarily in this Budget, but some time during the course of this mandate - if this could be considered; it will go a long way in alleviating the sufferings of people.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to analyse the cost-effectiveness also because when we weigh the number of patients islandwide undergoing this treatment against the cost that would be involved for setting up, in each of the regional hospitals, one hydrotherapy centre, it's not cost-effective. For the time being, we have other priorities; I'll have to tackle other priorities, but I cannot say when we will be coming with that hydrotherapy centre in all other hospitals.

HOSPITALS - PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSISTANTS

(No. 1B/553) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to public hospitals, she will consider the advisability of providing opportunities to the physiotherapy assistants, who are already practising thereat, to take up courses in the field of physiotherapy, with a view to upgrading and enhancing their status.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Physiotherapy Cadre is composed of two distinct grades, namely -

- (i) Physiotherapist which is a professional one and the entry requirement is a degree in Physiotherapy,
- (ii) Physiotherapy Assistant which is a supporting grade and the entry requirement is a School Certificate.

Physiotherapy Assistants are recruited in the first instance in a temporary capacity for a period of one year and they have to undergo on-the-job training. Upon appointment, all Physiotherapy Assistants are required to work under the supervision of qualified Physiotherapists.

It is not the policy of my Ministry to sponsor officers belonging to a supporting grade to obtain higher professional qualifications as this would open a floodgate for all other technical cadres to ask for such facilities, for example, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Speech and Hearing Therapy Assistants and Radiographic Assistants.

However, in line with the policy of capacity building in the public service, discussions have been held with all stakeholders with a view to providing a formal and structured training to the Physiotherapy Assistants with the collaboration of the Mauritius Institute of Health for enhancing their knowledge, skills and abilities, but not their status.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she had a meeting with the union representing this category of workers, I mean, the Physiotherapy Assistants, and can I know what had been the outcome of this meeting?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have had several meetings with unions and I can recall having a meeting with a group of Physiotherapy Assistants who have followed courses; they have obtained their degree and they want to be appointed as Physiotherapists. I have met them. I have told them that I am creating posts of Physiotherapist for them, but the problem now is that the scheme of service is being amended and we are waiting for the unions to provide their comments. We have to refer the matter to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs. When this is done, there will be an open competition. It will not be automatic.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does not the Minister consider it to be demotivating for members of staff who joined the service and who are already doing the service of Physiotherapist? They have been there for two decades or more and yet with no possibility of upgrading and, of course, promotion. This becomes a very demotivating factor. Is she aware of that?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am well aware of that. I am the first one to say that this can create frustration, but I am not responsible for the PRB report. The PRB report, itself, says that whenever a vacancy occurs there should be open competition. I am not responsible for that.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister just said that there is cause for frustration, but whenever there is frustration the work suffers. As a Minister, is she ready to perpetuate this type of things to happen?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has to understand that I cannot change the PRB report. I can make a case. In fact, I am trying to make a case with the Public Service Commission to consider whether we can advertise internally, but I have been told that this cannot be done, it has to be through open competition because it's not only for one grade, it is for the whole civil service.

Mr Dayal: I appreciate the last part of the answer of the hon. Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: I allow one last question. I think that this issue has thoroughly been discussed.

Mr Dayal: I appreciate the last part of her answer and I would much appreciate if such recommendations be made to the PRB, because PRB is not fixed in stone. With recommendations, necessary redress can be done and I thank the hon. Minister for this part of the answer.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

ERRAYAH ROAD, ST PIERRE - BRIDGE - WIDENING

(No. 1B/554) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bridge located at Errayah Road, near the Kalimaye, at Roselyne

Cottage, St Pierre, also known as Pont B. D., he will consider the advisability for the widening thereof, with a view to alleviating the difficulties caused thereat by the increasing traffic in the region.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the bridge at Errayah Road, St Pierre, is not a classified road and falls under the jurisdiction of Moka/Flacq District Council. The request will be transmitted to the District Council for consideration.

ST PIERRE - TRAFFIC JAM

(No. 1B/555) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the traffic jam caused by the new road humps placed in the vicinity of the Panchoo Workshop and Nelson College, St Pierre, and if so, will he consider the advisability for the removal thereof and the installation of a pedestrian hump in front of the college.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following repeated complaints from the inhabitants of Bois Chéri region and from the students of Nelson College regarding speeding in that region with represented safety hazards, mode rails were installed in the vicinity of Panchoo Workshop and Nelson College at St Pierre.

To date, no complaint has been received regarding the replacement of these mode rails.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as MP of the region, I have received many representations. I should like to request the hon. Minister if he could ask the technicians of TMRSU to effect site visits during peak time and see how much hardship it creates. There are two humps and they slow down traffic. There is a bridge next to it and it creates hell of a problem. Can I ask the Minister if a site visit could be conducted, to see *de visu* the situation and make the necessary redress?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at times, I really feel perplexed. On one side, you have got plenty of demands for the installation of speed humps and once these are already installed, then you have got a hue and cry from many places to have them removed. That is the reason why before putting and, at the same time, removing, one has to be extra cautious, because that involves time and money. That is the basic reason why we do not want to remove humps because before putting up humps, there have been thorough studies which have been carried out by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry. That is the reason why we

have to be a bit careful. Very often, I receive hundreds of requests and petitions to put up humps. Once they are already installed, then we receive dozens of petitions stating that these need to be removed. We should know which is which. We have to be careful in dealing with such matters and that is the reason why I would like to leave it in the hands of the technicians of my Ministry, to let them go and have look at it and take corrective measures.

Mr Dayal: Just to make a point, the two humps are very near, that is why it creates the traffic jam.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point. I think that we can move on to the next question. Hon. Guimbeau!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGES - FACILITIES

(No. 1B/556) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the religious pilgrimages held in Mauritius each year, he will state same, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) names of the religious group/s participating therein, and
- (b) amount of grants and financial support in terms of infrastructure and other facilities given by Government, for each of the last five years.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with the secular and welfare nature of our country, successive Governments through different Ministries and Departments have always provided support and facilities for religious pilgrimages held locally or abroad. Such facilities range from provision of amenities, security to health. It is the firm intention of this Government to pursue the same policy without fear or favour.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is not answering my question. Can he table a breakdown of all grants and financial support given to each religious group relating to pilgrimage for the past five years?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have got a secular credentials. I cannot compartmentalise because, since the very beginning, even the previous Governments, we have

adopted a policy, whichever Government was in power, that different departments starting from the Prime Minister through the Security Services down to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, CWA, CEB, Wastewater Authority, Water Resources Unit, my Ministry, MPI, NDU, RDA, the Ministry of Local Government through the local institutions and local corporations, at the same time, the Ministry of Environment through the Environment Unit, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Arts and Culture and all Ministries in their own way have been contributing. That is the reason why we would like to maintain the secular credentials and we do not want to compartmentalise and give breakdowns of how many rupees and cents have been spent; whichever party/group has been approaching the different departments, has been properly served and given all that was required.

Mr Guimbeau: I agree with what the hon. Minister says. All I am asking him is to give us a breakdown...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: It is so difficult...

The Deputy Speaker: Be seated, please! The hon. Member has put the question and the hon. Minister has answered that he does not wish to give the breakdown for some other reasons. I have no control - we cannot just insist and ask the hon. Minister to answer. He has got his reasons and he stated so in the House and we won't be able to insist even if the hon. Member is not satisfied with his reply.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot talk about transparency, there is no transparency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question if he has any supplementary.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister table a breakdown of all improvements made to infrastructure and public services relating to each pilgrimage over the past five years?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that we have got different departments starting from the Prime Minister's Office down to all other Ministries. It is very difficult to compute and we do

not even keep records, for example, how much of cleaning and painting works have been done. In addition to this, we have got certain works that we do. We do not understand whether it is of secular or religious nature, either it is a pilgrim who is going to use it or whether it is a tourist or a citizen of the country. If, for example, I am tarring one road that can lead to a religious place, at the same time, it may lead to the houses of many people. It can either be a classified road or a non-classified road. That is the reason why compartmentalisation in such matters is very difficult and impossible.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we, at least, know how much the MPI has spent for each of the pilgrimage during the past five years?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, as I have just mentioned, I do not keep records. For example, if I am going to tar the road that leads to Ganga Talao, it is not only meant for those pilgrims who are going to Ganga Talao, it is also meant for the tourists. If I am going to do some work at Père Laval, it is not only meant for the people who go to Père Laval, but for the common public also. Similar is the case for all other places where religious pilgrimages are held. This was the policy of any Government which has been in power.

The Deputy Speaker: We move on to next question now. Hon. Ramano!

FESTIVAL KRÉOL - COST

(No. 1B/557) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the last editions of the *Festival Kréol*, he will, in each case –

- (a) give a breakdown of the cost incurred, indicating the amount paid to each service provider, and
- (b) state the names of each contributory and sponsor, indicating the amount paid by them

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the First Edition of the Festival International Kreol was organised in the year 2006. In view of the popular success of the event, subsequent editions were held in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

The objective behind the organisation of the Festival International Kreol was to demonstrate, *inter alia*, the richness and authenticity and the diversity of the Mauritian culture, thereby showcasing the different aspects and the essence of the Kreol culture, namely the language, the people, the cuisine, the arts, the music and, at the same time, giving the Kreol culture its rightful place in our nation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore the event was meant to be a marketing asset to promote the cultural diversity of our Mauritian population as an added touristic attraction in line with our strategy to enhance the attractiveness of the destination and to diversify our tourism product offer. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, foreign journalists from various parts of the world were invited to cover the activities organised and to give international media coverage to these activities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the national importance of the event, the stakeholders of the tourism industry as well as the private sector operators sponsored the event by contributing towards the costs of organising the activities.

I am further informed that, given the richness and diversity characterising the kreol culture and traditions, numerous activities have been organised, in connection with each edition of the Festival in order to highlight the various facets of the Kreol culture, as follows -

For the year 2006 the following events were organised -

- (a) Artists Workshop;
- (b) “*Soirée Poésie*”;
- (c) Conference;
- (d) Open Debate;
- (e) All Night Concert, and
- (f) Culinary Exhibition.

For the year 2007 we had –

- (a) Conference;
- (b) *Soirée Ebony*;

- (c) *Soirée Rodriguaise;*
- (d) *Grand Tam Tam;*
- (e) *Soirée Poésie;*
- (f) *Soirée Jazz;*
- (g) *Soirée Raconte Zistwar, and*
- (h) All Night Concert.

For the year 2008 we had -

- (a) Conference;
- (b) *Célébrons La Femme Créole;*
- (c) *Sware Métis;*
- (d) *Sware Typik;*
- (e) *Sware Poésie, and*
- (f) *Grand Konser.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! You may proceed, hon. Minister!

Mr Bodha: For the year 2009, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,

- (a) Konferans;

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Bhagwan, please! We listen to the reply.

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Bhagwan, please! Hon. vice-Prime Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Bhagwan, please! I am on my feet and I expect that, as a senior Member, you will appreciate that you should have some due respect for the Chair. Yes, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for year 2009, we had -

- (b) Konferans;
- (c) Salon Culinaire;
- (d) Dance Nou Listwar;
- (e) Emile & Images;
- (f) Rezistans;
- (g) Histoire d'une Cathédrale;
- (h) Légendes Du Segga, and
- (i) All Night Concert.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this regard, the services of numerous service providers were resorted to for the provision of such items as podiums, logistics, props, security, artists, food and beverage, sound and lighting, catering, and other facilities and equipment.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Order, please!

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that around 150,000 people attended each of the editions of the event, and just for the year 2006 edition...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, keep cool!

Mr Bodha:...the organisers had recourse to some 100 artists, both local and foreign, as well as some 125 service providers.

In view of the great number of service providers involved in the organisation of the different activities for the various editions held in the context of the Festival *Kréol* for the years 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, the information with regard to paragraphs (a) and (b) is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, peut-on savoir quand tous ces chiffres seront soumis à la bibliothèque de l'Assemblée Nationale?

Mr Bodha: Very soon.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais savoir le budget qui est prévu pour l'édition de 2010 ?

Mr Bodha: Well, we had a meeting this morning and we are working on the edition of 2010. We have not yet fixed the budget but, from what I gather, we have a provision of about Rs5 m. which was earmarked in last year's budget.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, tout ce scandale qui entoure l'organisation de ce festival, l'utilisation de l'argent public...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Est-ce que l'actuel ministre va recommander au gouvernement que le directeur de l'audit fasse une enquête approfondie sur l'organisation de ce festival et de soumettre un rapport ou recommander au gouvernement la nomination d'une commission d'enquête, afin de faire la lumière sur l'organisation de ce festival *kréol* ?

Mr Bodha: I think the hon. Member...

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer, please!

Mr Bodha: The hon. Member is going too far, because the accounts of Events Mauritius for the years 2007, 2008, 2009 have already been prepared and have already been audited. As far as I have been informed, all procedures have been followed with regard to tenders. For the organisation of 2010, if there is any Member on the other side of the House who would like to participate in the organisation, he is most welcome.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Uteem!

STC – FOREIGN CURRENCY - PURCHASE

(No. 1B/558) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the purchase of foreign currency by the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the -

- (a) amount thereof purchased annually;
- (b) procedure for the purchase thereof;
- (c) names of the sellers, and
- (d) measures taken to hedge against risks of currency fluctuations.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, for year 2009, it has purchased USD364.1 m. For this current year, it is estimated that the STC will purchase about USD400 m.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that a purchase request is made by e-mail, sent to the Bank of Mauritius 24 hours before the intended transaction. All purchases are made on the day of that of the payment of the relevant invoice.

In regard to part (c) of the question, as from June 2010, STC purchases its USD from the Bank of Mauritius only.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the STC does not currently hedge against risks of currency fluctuations.

Mr Uteem: May I ask the hon. Minister at what price will the STC buy foreign currency from the Central Bank? Will it be at spot rate, or will there be a pre contract arrangement at a predetermined price?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, it depends on the fluctuation rate, because it is not always fixed. But one thing I can say is that, when we are buying from the Bank of Mauritius, we are having more facilities and discounts than at the commercial banks. This is the reason why we are buying from the Bank of Mauritius. If not, it would not be necessary. The commission rate is always better than that of the commercial banks.

Mr Uteem: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, the Central Bank will sell the currency at a discount. It could be going against market practice and distorting the foreign currency market. Can he confirm that there has been an agreement signed with the Central Bank, where the latter is going to sell at a discount?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, let me explain clearly. We are just protecting the consumer. The money of the STC comes from the consumer. The fact that we are having the best rate from the

Bank of Mauritius, this is the reason why we have chosen to buy from them. In fact, we were buying at a higher rate in the past - this was at the time of Mr Soomarooa - but now the rate is different. We are having a better rate than at the commercial banks.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of allegations of conflict of interests while Mr Soomarooa was General Manager, in connection with...

The Deputy Speaker: This has got nothing to do with this question. The hon. Member should come with a specific question.

Mr Uteem: With the introduction of GBOT now and the trading in futures and derivatives for foreign currency, does not the hon. Minister think that the State Trading Corporation can hedge the risk of adverse dollar/rupee fluctuation by buying and participating on the GBOT market?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said, concerning hedging, the STC does not currently hedge against the risk of currency fluctuation. I don't think that we can just hedge for three or five years. We are not going to repeat what happened in the past. The situation today does not encourage STC to hedge.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the purpose of hedging is that today the STC will already know at what rate it is going to buy the dollar when it has to pay its suppliers, and it can limit the risk of paying a higher price by going and buying a future and a derivative contract. May I insist and ask the hon. Minister whether he is considering setting up a proper committee to consider to hedge against any currency risk?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Minister has already explained the situation in this case. I will allow one more supplementary to hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm whether it is a policy of Government not to allow the STC to hedge against currency fluctuation and, if so, why?

Mr Soodhun: I do not know whether it is a policy as such. There is a contradiction between what hon. Uteem said and the hon. Member is saying. I have already explained that we cannot hedge now when we know the situation of the dollar. Whenever we need any currency

from the Bank of Mauritius we have to apply for it within 48 hours and this is the practice which we are applying in the interest of the population.

RODRIGUES - KALUNDÉ REHABILITATION SCHEME - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/559) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the present economic situation in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the accrued debts and the number of debtors, sector-wise, under the Kalundé Rehabilitation Scheme as at to date;
- (b) the number of eligible beneficiaries of the DBM Support Programme, and
- (c) if Government proposes to include the Kalundé Rehabilitation Scheme in the Support Programme and, if not, why not.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, the Kalundé Rehabilitation Scheme was set up in April 2003 following the passage of the cyclone Kalundé in Rodrigues. The scheme was elaborated to provide immediate relief to the agricultural community in Rodrigues, namely vegetables and fruits growers, livestock breeders, fishermen, small businesses and other income generating activities affected by the cyclone. Loans were granted to 1,526 beneficiaries for an aggregate amount of Rs33.52 m. As at date, 693 accounts are in arrears for a total amount of Rs18.78 m.

In August 2010, the DBM Support Programme for SMEs was announced under the ERCP. This programme applies to all borrowers who have not availed themselves of the facility under the Amnesty Scheme announced in the Budget Speech 2008-2009, which provided a one-off settlement facility for the repayment of arrears to those who have contracted loans up to Rs200,000 before April 2003 and whose accounts have been in arrears for at least five years. Borrowers under the Kalundé Rehabilitation Scheme therefore did not qualify for the measure under the Amnesty Scheme since the scheme was launched on 01 April 2003.

As the DBM Support Programme for SMEs under the ERCP targets borrowers who have not availed themselves of the Amnesty facility, the borrowers under the Kalundé Rehabilitation Scheme do not again qualify for the facility.

However, all the facilities under the ERCP are applicable to other borrowers in Rodrigues who have contracted loans up to Rs200,000 before April 2003 and whose accounts have been in arrears for at least five years. For example, 359 borrowers in Rodrigues whose loan balance does not exceed Rs10,000 have benefited from the write-off of their loans. The Bank has already written to borrowers in Rodrigues whose loans exceed Rs10,000 up to Rs75,000 to offer them the facility under the ERCP. Then there will remain another batch of borrowers in Rodrigues whose loans exceed Rs75,000 up to Rs200,000.

As of date, the number of borrowers in Rodrigues whose loans exceed Rs10,000 up to Rs200,000 and who are in a position to take advantage of the DBM Support Programme under the ERCP is 352.

It is to be noted that under the former Amnesty Scheme, 104 borrowers in Rodrigues have benefited from the one-off settlement facility. In their case, an amount of Rs4.5 m. had been written off.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. vice-Prime Minister for his answer. The ambit of my original question was also to ask sector-wise for an overall debt situation at the DBM in Rodrigues. May I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he has an answer or will he be able to either table or state the general debt situation of the DBM in Rodrigues?

Mr Jugnauth: Sector-wise, unfortunately, up to now I have not been able to get all the figures for each specific sector. If from what I understand, the hon. Member means vegetables and fruits growers separately from livestock breeders and so on, of course, we will compute this information and circulate it in due course.

RODRIGUES - LEGAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATIONS SERVICES

(No. 1B/560) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to Rodrigues, he will state if Government proposes to set up the appropriate facilities for the timely delivery of legal advice and representations services thereat, with a view to providing access thereto to the Rodriguan Community and the promotion of good governance thereat, and if so, when and if not, why not.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I state at the outset that there is no legal impediment for any member of the Rodriguan community to seek legal advice from any legal adviser of his choice.

I am also advised that there are barristers, attorneys and notaries who have set up their Chambers or *Etudes* in Rodrigues and as such, there is no hindrance for Rodriguans to seek legal advice in Rodrigues itself, if they so wish.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition, my office is currently working in close collaboration with the Bar Council with a view to setting up a *pro bono* scheme whereby legal advice will be more readily accessible to a wider section of the population.

On the other hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if this question is directed towards the tendering of legal advice by my office, I wish to inform the House that the Attorney General being the Principal Legal Adviser to the Government and its various Ministries, including the Ministry of Rodrigues.

Therefore, any request for legal advice for the Ministry of Rodrigues has to be directed to the Attorney General's Office. In this context, there is no need to set up additional facilities in Rodrigues for the delivery of legal advice to the Ministry.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has its own private legal adviser and any legal advice that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly seeks in the interest of Rodrigues is tendered by its private legal adviser.

Mr François: With regard to the difficulties and some sort of no choice of abuse raised by inhabitants of Rodrigues while retaining private legal services, will the Attorney General inform the House whether Government envisage any reform in the way the legal services in our Republic are regulated and put the consumer interests at the heart of the regulatory framework?

Mr Varma: As I have already informed the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an ongoing process which is working well and there is no hindrance in the delivery of legal advice. Our countrymen from Rodrigues can easily get legal advice from the legal advisers of their choice and there is also the *in forma pauperis* whereby the Government pays law practitioners as regards people who are in difficulty.

(No. 1B/561) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the preparation of the athletes for the Indian Ocean Games 2011, he will state the names of all the –

- (a) *Directeurs Techniques Nationaux*;
- (b) national coaches, indicating the federation to which each one is attached, and
- (c) facilities put at the disposal of the pre-selected athletes during their training sessions.

Mr Ritoo: The information related to parts (a) DTN and (b) National Coaches are being tabled.

With regard to part (c), the following facilities are being put at the disposal of athletes and their federations -

- (1) installation of water filters on all training sites to enable athletes to have access to clean water;
- (2) regular means of transport to all athletes;
- (3) all technical, logistics and infrastructural support to the athletes and coaches;
- (4) provision of specific equipment and weight training materials where required;
- (5) the services of masseurs, Nursing Officers and Physiotherapists to all Sports Federations on training sites;
- (6) medical services on a regular basis, including Saturdays;
- (7) arrangements for specific medical tests required in the context of the Games, and
- (8) local and overseas training camps as per requirements and financial means available.

Mr Quirin: Le ministre peut-il nous dire quelles sont les disciplines qui vont participer aux prochains jeux des îles et qui n'ont pas encore de DTN à ce jour?

Mr Ritoo: Je n'ai pas bien entendu la question.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que le ministre peut-il nous citer les noms des disciplines qui n'ont pas de DTN à ce jour ? Les disciplines qui vont participer aux jeux des îles.

Mr Ritoo: Well, as at date the DTN is available in the Mauritius Football Association, that is, Mr Christophe Desbouillons. Mr Philippe Pascal is DTN of the Mauritius Swimming

Federation; Mr Trendafil Stoychev is DTN of Mauritius Amateur Weight Lifters and Power Lifters Association while Mr Jean Claude Nagloo, a Mauritian, is acting as DTN for the Mauritius Amateur Boxing Association and the rest of the federations have not required any DTN for the time being.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre considère la nécessité de faire bénéficier aux autres disciplines les services d'un DTN bien avant les prochains jeux ?

Mr Ritoo: Where the need is felt, of course, we are going to help them, but the federations are supposed to identify a DTN and come forward with a proposal so that the Ministry can help them.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre veut dire qu'à ce jour il n'a reçu aucune demande des autres fédérations par rapport aux services d'un DTN ?

Mr Ritoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one or two federations have requested for a DTN, but I have told them that if there is need for a DTN, they themselves should go and identify their DTN and come forward with a proposal, then the Ministry will accept. I can't go and find a DTN for them because it all depends upon the federation. Normally, to have a DTN, the specific sports federation should liaise with the international federation and find out a DTN, like we had a DTN in football from France just because all the sport structures like the *Ecole de foot, centre de formation* are as in France. That's why we identified a French DTN. It all depends upon the specific federation to identify from which country they want a DTN and then, of course, the Ministry will accept.

Mr Quirin: Je voudrais savoir, M. le président, quelles sont ces disciplines qui ont fait la demande récemment dont vient de parler le ministre?

Mr Ritoo: The volleyball, basketball and badminton have requested for a DTN.

Mr Khamajeet: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in spite of all the facilities that the hon. Minister just mentioned, can he inform the House whether the athletes are provided with some form of insurance cover in their preparations?

Mr Ritoo: Normally, all athletes participating in the national games have got an insurance cover.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has explored the possibility, in the context of bilateral agreements Mauritius has with friendly countries like India, even UK, France and Europe, of having a DTN to help us in the context of the Indian Ocean Games and, at least, to make the maximum for us to win gold medals?

Mr Ritoo: During my last visit to India regarding the Commonwealth Games, I already established contacts with the Minister and the federations there so that we can have training camps in India and other countries as well. Of course, we have already identified them.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question from hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. Le ministre, dans sa réponse à ma question initiale, a parlé de stage qu'il a prévu à l'intention des athlètes, des sportifs qui vont participer aux prochains jeux des îles. Est-ce qu'il pourrait justement nous citer les disciplines qui vont bénéficier justement de ces stages?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the DTNs, the coaches and the federations ask for a *stage*, but it will be finalised only when they come with the final selection. Actually, they are only with pre-selected athletes. At the time when the IOI games will be approaching, then they will be finalising the final selection and then they will ask for *stage* abroad or local training camps. It all depends upon their demand. I have got one or two federations whom I met yesterday. They suggested that they want to go to South Africa, but it will be finalised only when they would come with the final selection.

Mrs Ribot: M. le président, je voudrais demander au ministre s'il n'est pas grand temps de commencer à multiplier les rencontres internationales pour ceux qui vont nous représenter, mais pas aux frais de ces athlètes, mais aux frais de l'État.

Mr Ritoo: I don't know. In fact, I don't understand what the hon. Member wants to say. All the athletes are already having *stage*. Most of our athletes are actually being trained abroad. Yesterday I went to the table tennis federation, out of the eight *pongistes*, five are actually trained abroad. So, they are already benefiting and all the payments are effected by the Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are on the eve of the Indian Ocean Islands Games. From past experience, we have seen that many of our athletes do have difficulties because they have to work and do their training also. Does the hon. Minister consider to have a

sort of planning for those who have been selected or pre-selected to have time off or other types of facilities for a full time training in the national interest?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are planning as from January - when the games will be approaching - to have full training for the athletes, all those who will be representing the country and make provision with the concerned employers so that we can get time off and all facilities put at the disposal of the athletes so that they can have full training or even being taken care of by private firms so that they can train adequately.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(No. 1B/562) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Cultural Centre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Centre, information as to -

- (a) the names of the representatives from the -
 - (i) Rabita-Al Alam-Al-Islami;
 - (ii) Islamic Development Board, and
 - (iii) Islamic Socio-cultural organisation
- (b) if the approval of the Rabita Office in Mauritius has been sought and obtained for the appointment of the members of the Board and if so, table copy thereof, and
- (c) if any member has been holding office for more than six years.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for drawing my attention to the constitution of the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Cultural Centre. I am pleased to inform the House that my Ministry is presently working on the reconstitution of the Islamic Cultural Centre Board.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question was quite specific and we wanted to know who are the representatives currently sitting on the Board of Trustees and who appointed them. May I know from the hon. Minister who are the representatives and who has appointed them?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand the concern of the hon. Member, but I would like to inform the House that the nature of this question is such that I have to await for the return of the Chairman of the ICC, who is leading the Hajj mission. On his return, I will get the information required and table it for the House.

Mr Uteem: Would the hon. Minister, at least, agree that the provisions of the Act relating to the appointment of the members of the Board of Trustees have not been complied with and this falls under the responsibility of the Minister?

Mr Choonee: That is why I mentioned it earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am working over it again and I know what the expectation from the ICC is. As a caring and forward looking Government, we will come with a new Board.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Guimbeau!

NEW GEORGE V STADIUM - DRAIN NETWORK

(No. 1B/563) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the New George V stadium, he will state if –

- (a) the drain network thereat has recently been upgraded and if so, indicate -
 - (i) by whom, and
 - (ii) the cost thereof
- (b) the football ground has been recovered by new top soil and grass planted and, if so, indicate -
 - (i) by whom, and
 - (ii) the cost thereof, and
- (c) he is aware of the severe persisting water accumulation thereat after rainfalls and, if so, give the reasons therefor.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract for the rehabilitation and upgrading of the New George V Stadium was awarded to Active Décor Co. Ltd and the works done so far, that is, the construction of drains and planting of grass have been carried out by that company only.

The cost of the drain network is around Rs1 m. while that of the turf is around Rs3 m.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am aware of the persisting accumulation of water on the turf. In that respect, my Ministry has requested the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to cause an inspection of the drain network. An exercise was carried out last week and it was found that 7 of the 10 drains were not functioning properly.

The contractor has been instructed to open these drains for inspection and remedial action. This exercise is expected to be completed by the end of this week and the top dressing as well of levelling of the turf by end of November.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to refer to PQ No. B/297 of 13 July 2010, where I asked the Minister to table all the contracts awarded for the renovation of the stadium. Was the needful done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Mr Ritoo: All the information required was tabled.

Mr Guimbeau: *M. le président, je voudrais savoir s'il y a des retards sur les travaux* and if so, has there been any penalty charged to the contractors and if he can state how many months has there been for the delay?

Mr Ritoo: The contract was awarded to Active Décor on 01 September 2009 and it has not yet been completed. It was expected to be completed by the end of December 2009 with six months maintenance period that is up to the world cup June 2010. But the delay was mainly due to the inclement weather. The soil is muddy and of clay type which retains lots of water. I have got a report from the Meteorological services. Hence, the contractor was not in a position to work the soil with heavy machinery. After every rainfall the contractor has to wait three or four days before resuming work because of the nature of the soil which takes time to dry out. The work was therefore delayed considerably.

Mr Guimbeau: Who is going to pay for the penalties on the extension of time?

Mr Ritoo: Since work is not yet completed, we have not paid the contractor. The money is still being retained until the final completion.

Mr Quirin: Je me souviens effectivement de la réponse du ministre il y a plus de trois ou quatre mois de cela par rapport à une question concernant le stade George V et je viens d'entendre exactement la même réponse. Donc, ce que je suis en train de déduire, les travaux

auraient dû être terminés, si je comprends bien, en décembre 2009. Il y a eu ensuite un prolongement en juin 2010. On est aujourd'hui le 09 novembre 2010 et on est toujours dans la même situation. Il n'y a eu aucune amélioration. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si les travaux seront terminés dans les mois à venir ou dans une année?

Mr Ritoo: As I have told you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to inclement weather the work was considerably delayed and, during the rainy season, my Ministry in collaboration with the Chairman of the CNNF, Mr Vincent Rogers, sought the advice of the Mr André How Chong of Réunion Island who is an expert in turfing. We effected two site visits free of charge in March and October 2010. Mr Chong and his technicians recommended a modification of the drainage system. The implementation of this modification further delayed the completion of the project. A testing of the drains carried out has shown that pipes in seven of the drains have collapsed causing clogging and thus preventing evacuation of water. The inner report submitted by Mr André Chong stated that the remaining works can be carried out by the actual contractor of the *Active Décor*. Actually *Active Décor* is doing the rehabilitation of the layfield and we hope that in three months it should be alright.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are talking of Stade George V which is a national monument and this stadium has been redone some years back. Would the Minister have a look at the structures? *C'est dans un état de décrépitude*. Can we know from the Minister who is responsible? We are not talking about modification; we are talking of the stadium itself. *Tous les panneaux*, the paints, the roof, *sont dans un état de décrépitude*. Is the Minister agreeable to ask an independent surveyor to conduct a survey *sur l'état de ce stade*, at least, to do emergency works? This is our national stadium.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated, we have just completed the painting works. The cleaning works have been completed very recently and the lighting facilities have now been provided and we are waiting, at least, for the playfield to be completed so that we can go ahead with the inauguration and the renaming of the stadium as it was stated in one of my statements in this august assembly.

Mr Guimbeau: I would like to ask the hon. Minister who is Fineway Sandling Work Ltd et, deuxièmement, M. le président, suite à l'évaluation faite par les officiers du ministère, il a été constaté que la quasi-totalité système du drain sur le terrain est inefficace et que, très

probablement, il faudrait revoir ou refaire tout le système. I would like to ask the hon. Minister, following the visit of his officials where they noticed that the drain system is not working, what he proposes to do. His own officers have stated that the whole network has to be done again. We would like to know from the hon. Minister what he is going to do.

Mr Ritoo: There is an officer-in-charge who is supervising the work at George V stadium and he submits regular progress report as regards works that are being carried out. As I stated in one of my replies, a testing of the drains has shown that pipes in seven of the drains have collapsed, causing clogging and thus preventing evacuation of water, The expert, Mr André Chong, has stated that the remaining works can be carried out by Active Décor. The contractor is doing the work and we are actually receiving regular reports from them.

TRAINING AND PLACEMENT SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/564) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Training and Placement Scheme under the National Empowerment Fund, he will state the amount spent by the Fund therefor, giving a list of the enterprises that have benefitted therefrom and indicate the amount disbursed to each enterprise, since the setting up of the Fund.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly as soon as possible.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any mechanism to follow up those who have benefitted for the training and even a mechanism to evaluate the training that has been provided by the different firms?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am told that 75% of the people who are placed in this scheme should have been retained by the employer at the end of the scheme. But I must say that for some time now we have been trying to improve our monitoring system at the NEF, not just for this one, but for a lot of other schemes that we run and my wish is, in fact, if we don't find someone in-house, to appoint an external auditor to come and evaluate all the effectiveness of our programmes including this programme.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been apprised of cases where these people are sent for training and, in fact, they are not receiving any training, but are just working as any other person would have worked for that particular firm?

Mr Duval: I am not aware of any specific cases which the hon. Member has mentioned and I would be happy if she could provide the information, but that is one of the risks of this sort of programme. There may be one or two flaws, there always is, but generally we are happy with the system. In fact, we cannot attempt to fight poverty if we do not give people jobs, which is the main thing. In fact, this programme will be doubled next year, want I have twice as many people placed next year.

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS (PRIVATE) – BLOOD – FEE

(No. 1B/565) **Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Blood Bank, she will state the price charged thereby per pint of blood to the patients who follow treatment in private medical institutions indicating the -

- (a) mode of calculation, giving a breakdown thereof;
- (b) date of introduction of the scheme, and
- (c) underlying policy.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, blood and blood products are offered by the Blood Transfusion Service of my Ministry free of charge to all patients attending all hospitals.

However, to come back to private medical institutions and to part (a) of the question, I wish to point out that no fee whatsoever is claimed for blood as such. The amount of Rs1500 charged is specifically for the processing of blood per pint. By processing of blood, I mean expenses in connection with -

- a) collection of blood;
- b) testing, and
- c) storage

In the mode of calculation, the following items are taken into consideration -

- (i) consumables such as blood bags and filters;
- (ii) reagents for blood grouping and screening of transfusion transmitted infections (HIV, Hepatitis B & C and syphilis);
- (iii) equipment;
- (iv) manpower (for example, overtime in view of limited shelf life of blood), and
- (v) transport (motivation and recruitment of blood donors).

Concerning part (b), the new schedule of laboratory fees came into force on 20 June 2009, date of gazetting of the Central Health Laboratory (Fees) Regulations 2009.

As for part (c), the underlying policy of my Ministry is to recover part of the costs incurred. But I wish to point out also that certain categories of patients attending private health institutions and requiring transfusion of blood on a regular lifelong basis are exempted from payment of fees. Here I am referring to patients suffering from -

- (a) renal failure who need dialysis treatment, and
- (b) thalassemia, haemophilia and other chronic anaemias.

With regard to regular voluntary blood donors, who are in need of blood transfusion for themselves or for their next to kin when admitted in private health institutions, they are granted two pints of whole blood and five units of blood components for every five blood donations done.

In rare cases of massive blood transfusions arising from medical emergencies (major surgical operations and accidents), the first eight units of blood or blood components only are charged.

Dr S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this maze of an answer which has been given to this House we are gambling on words and I would like to ask the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr S. Boolell: May I continue?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes! Put your question, please! Hon. Boolell, please address the Chair! Put your question!

Dr S. Boolell: My question is, at the end of the day, when somebody gets admitted to a private medical institution, does he have to pay Rs1,500 per pint that is processed? Also, before allowing the hon. Minister to give her answer in the maze that she is always providing, can I know whether there has been an informed consent from the donor that his blood will be processed to the tune of Rs1,500 per pint?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, allow me to tell the hon. Member that he is in a maze. He does not understand what I have said or, at least, he does not want to understand because I believe that my answer is very clear. I could not be clearer than what I have been. Now, to come back to the question of Rs1,500, obviously, the patient is paying. If we are asking the private clinic to pay, obviously I believe, the private clinic is passing on the cost to the patient, but the calculation of fees for the supply of processed blood is purely on a cost recovery basis and we are not making any profit on it.

Dr S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister what happens to the blood money recovered?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It goes to the Consolidated Fund. It is so simple.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Guimbeau!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I understand, the blood we gave for free is being charged Rs1,500 in private clinics. Can we know from the hon. Minister what measure she is going to take to stop such *dominère*?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I explained in my reply that we have to recover the cost incurred. Who is going to recover that cost? Who is going to pay for the cost that we have to incur? The hon. Member should have listened to my reply.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Boolell!

Dr S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the informed consent of the donor sought at the time that he is donating? Is the donor made aware that his blood will be sold directly or indirectly to the tune of Rs1,500?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the blood donor is fully aware that whenever he is giving his blood, it is stored at the Central Laboratory and that has a cost, and if ever private institutions ask for the blood, they have to bear the cost.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Sorefan: I see we are making a lot of debate on human blood. With all due respect to the hon. Minister, does she not think that the amount that we collect per year is relatively peanuts to the budget of this country? Don't you think it will be fair to make it free and let Mauritius be a free country in terms of giving blood because the perception in the public is that we give blood free and the Ministry is selling it? In another way, it is deterring people to give blood. It will be a plus. We will have more people to give blood in the near future.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member had listened to my reply he would not have come with this question because I clearly made the point that we are not selling blood. It is the cost of processing of the blood which is being charged.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. Jhugroo, please! Yes, hon. Barbier, put your question!

Mr Barbier: We blood donors - I am myself a blood donor - are giving our blood free to anyone who deserves it. I want to know from the hon. Minister what does she consider to cost more? Is it blood or the processing? This is my question.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the processing costs a lot and we cannot afford it because blood is a precious commodity and I can tell you that since the fee has been increased, there has been a decrease in the demand of blood from private institutions. That can explain why, in the past, there has been, all the time, a demand for blood by private institutions and when the fee has been increased there has been a decrease in the demand. That explains that there was, at some point in time, a *gaspillage* of the precious blood which was donated by blood donors.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think there is one important issue from an ethical view and we have to talk about the informed consent. I think from an ethical view, we must receive an informed consent. It is a very formal way of acting and - I am a blood donor too - we have to know that what we are giving free, for one reason or another there will be a charge before someone is going to benefit from that gets it; that the Government will charge for any reason. I am not discussing about the reason, but I am asking: are we going to let those people who go for free, paying their transport, giving their time and their blood know? Will these people be informed? You are paying your transport, your time and blood free, but we, as a Government, are going to charge those who need your blood, a particular fee. Will the Government do that?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once again, I will lay emphasis that we are not selling the blood. We have got a processing cost. Who is going to incur that cost? That is the first issue. Now the second issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the question of *gaspillage*. I have just said that when the fee was Rs500....

(Interruptions)

I am replying, Mr Deputy Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: On a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member wants to take a point of order. We shall listen to her.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have put a question, true it is you do not have the right to control, but we cannot lose the time ...

The Deputy Speaker: What is the hon. Member's point of order?

Mrs Labelle: We do not have to lose the time of the House with this inappropriate answer to my question.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I do not think that it is a point of order and I will allow the hon. Minister to complete her answer.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say once again - and as I said, I will stress on that point - we are not selling blood, we have got the cost to incur and we have to charge for that.

(Interruptions)

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to tell you once again that when the fee was Rs500, *il y avait un gaspillage, il y avait beaucoup de demandes*, and that the demand went down when the fee was increased.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Does the hon. Member want people who donate their blood to have a *gaspillage*, or when that blood goes to the private clinics, it is *mal servi? Ce n'est pas possible! Il y avait un gaspillage, et nous avons à mettre un terme à cela.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! I allow one last question from hon. Boolell.

Dr S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, blood transfusion is a bridge between communities. It transgresses political divides, ethnic differences and religious differences. Would the Minister kindly consider, as a sign of gesture towards the rich or the poor who attend the clinics, to make this item free of charge?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Member whether, when somebody is poor, he goes to the clinic or he comes to the hospital?

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! I wish to inform the House that the Table has been advised that PQ Nos. 1B/566 and 1B/585 have been withdrawn.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, 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 Social Integration and Economic Empowerment rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.34 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.14 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

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

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

Question again proposed.

Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to join the previous speakers from both sides of the House, though some of them are not here today, in congratulating the hon. Speaker upon his election for a second successive mandate. His election is sufficient testimony of the confidence and trust that this House has in him and in his capacity to conduct its deliberation, and his professionalism, coupled with his sense of equity and fairness, along with his thorough knowledge of parliamentary procedures, has simply been outstanding. This is why everybody in this august Assembly, as well as outside, and in unison, agrees on one point. His name spells fairness. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my hearty congratulation to him for this renewed trust of the House.

I would also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who, I must admit, is doing a great job. Congratulations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would furthermore like to thank Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, from the depth of my heart, for the trust he has placed in me for a fourth successive time, in giving me the opportunity to stand for the poll in the same constituency, that is, the Constituency of Quartier Militaire/Moka, known as Constituency No. 8, and to form part of his team.

I avail myself of the same opportunity to congratulate him for the brilliant and remarkable manner in which he captained his team to a resounding and landslide victory. As some people had put it: *une victoire incontestable et sans bavure*. His sincerity, his conviction and the courage that goes with it, because conviction is important and more important is the courage of his conviction, and above all his determination, make of him an unparalleled leader in this country, revered from people of all walks of life, young, old, men and women alike.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here is a man who has earned the trust and respect of the whole Mauritian nation. We are convinced that, under his able and visionary leadership, we can safely reaffirm and vouch that this country is well poised, is in, for another term of progress and stability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last five years turned out to be very challenging years, especially against a backdrop of an international economic crunch. As the House is aware, as a small island developing economy, we are not shielded from its effect, that is, we are not shielded from the economic crisis that the world was facing. This is in sharp contrast to the period 2000 and 2005. We all know that, between 2000 and 2005, the world economy did not face any major drawbacks.

In short, all the ingredients were there, that is, all the elements were so nicely and beautifully combined, packed together to usher an era of economic prosperity, harmony and progress. But, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nothing of that sort happened, because they failed. They simply failed, through lack of vision and foresightedness, to capitalise on the favourable economic climate prevailing then. Instead, and sadly enough, the country witnessed a period of economic downturn; the period 2000-2005. As we use to say, the sea was calm, the sky was blue, no economic crisis, the situation was brilliant, but then, they failed miserably. They had even referred to that situation as *un état d'urgence économique*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a nutshell, *c'était un aveu de faiblesse, et pas n'importe lequel; mais de taille*. Because the assessment was based on the evaluation of their own performance by themselves. A certificate of failure that they bestowed upon themselves by themselves. *Un bilan* of their own term in office. For once, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they did their evaluation correctly, very well, and they could not be clearer than that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we look back at the situation between 2005 and 2010, what do we notice? An altogether different economic scenario, an international banking crisis that culminated into an international financial crisis, and again culminated into an international

economic crisis. We all know the attendant implication of that crisis, that is, among others, rise in the price of oil on the world market. We were not spared from this scourge. On the other hand, to make matters worse, amongst other things, there was a drop of 36% in the price of sugar, not to mention the difficulties in the tourism and the textile sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how come we managed successfully to grapple with the economic conditions and steer our country out of the crisis without for that matter shattering the fabrics of our society? On the contrary, we not only stood out of the difficult situation but, at the same time, we never put the social peace and harmony in jeopardy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question that begs for an answer is: what really made the difference? What is the secret of this recipe? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to my mind, it all boils down to one simple thing. It's a question of culture. It is a culture of telling the truth; a culture of taking bold decisions when the circumstances so dictate, when the circumstances so demand, of taking all the people on board. It is a culture of adopting a holistic approach, of not looking for a winning formula based on party politics, but a winning formula for the country, for the Mauritian nation at large, for the common good, for one and all; a culture of putting the Constitution of the country first.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this culture is also reflected in the manifesto of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* and set out in the Government Programme 2010-2015. When we examine the programme, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have every reason to be proud of the vision and seriousness of purpose that characterise it. Because Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it charts the course of action of this Government for the five years to come. More importantly, it draws the road map for the development of a future and prosperous Mauritius based on the notion of *l'unité, l'égalité et la modernité*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened attentively to some Members on the other side of the House. Regretfully, I must admit that most of them were below the mark, not to say devoid of seriousness of purpose that such an exercise calls for, that is, constructive criticisms. It appears that this is not in their lexicon. In the majority of cases, it was nothing more than the repetitive babbling; the repetitive old rhetoric, the same old recipe, and the same old story. Listening to them, of course, reminded me of an anecdote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I came across some time back. I must stress that this anecdote fits their head fully and squarely. It runs as follows. In the face of the intervention of the Opposition, a citizen asked a priest: "Father, when you see

such politicians, do you pray for them?” Then came the answer. The priest replied: “No, my son, I pray for the country”. So, you can imagine the state of this Opposition. In the face of their intervention, we can say that the country cannot win with them, thank God, *que le ciel soit loué*, we have a team of responsible patriots on this side of the House which thinks of the country. Of course, it is most disheartening to witness this situation - a resignation from the call of their duty, a resignation from the debate that will chart out the future of this country.

In short, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a total abdication from their responsibility. This Government Programme is a yard stick to gauge the achievements of this Government during the last five years but, above all, it lays down the foundation for *une autre île Maurice*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, may I take this opportunity to clarify one wrong perception that is being deliberately ventilated by the Opposition and this concerns the list of orators to intervene on the last day of the sitting of the House. I must say that the list was agreed upon by both Whips from the Government side and the Opposition side. Still, in spite of the agreement, most regretfully, the Opposition staged a walk out. Their attitude was most incomprehensible and to say the least, unethical, especially as the list had been cleared by both Whips from the Government side and the Opposition side. It was circulated and it was early in the morning that they found something, a pretext. I say a deliberate ploy to stage a walkout. Perhaps they were running short of ideas or had gone bankrupt of ideas, and yet they have the pretention to govern this country. *Plus irresponsable que ça tu meurs!*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition have clamoured on all rooftops that they have been denied of opportunities to voice out their views and contributions on certain issues. How many of them – I am asking from the Opposition side - are alive to the provisions of the Standing Orders relating to the Private Members’ Motion? Do they know that it is a very powerful tool in the hands of Parliamentarians to raise important issues of national interest? I have a very simple question for them. How many motions have they tabled in the interest of their constituents? None ! *Nous n’avons aucune leçon à apprendre de cette Opposition, M. le président*. Let me say, loudly and boldly, that a Private Members’ Motion gives a Member of this House, be they backbenchers from the Government side or Members from Opposition Side, an opportunity to voice their feelings, their opinions, to raise issues which they deem of national importance and once these motions are tabled, it gives an opportunity to have a brainstorming session in this House or debates, not only in this House, but outside this House, and in so doing debates are

provoked in the media, in the written press, in the spoken press, in clubs, *dans coin la boutique*, everywhere, because people are alive to what is happening - thanks to the press that we have in this country. So, they failed miserably Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir and they claim that they have been denied of an opportunity to voice their feelings, their opinions. They claim they had several issues to raise, but they failed miserably, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They did not table a single Private Members' motion I think that for more than 30 years they have been in this House and they don't know the provisions of this House. Once a motion is tabled, debate is on, brainstorming session is on; everywhere you find people debating about it, especially Mauritius has the media which is very much on the alert and provokes debate on whatever issues of national importance. There is one more thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the calendar year in presenting Budget this year has changed. So, it is normal that there will be a change in the calendar of sittings. They claimed that Parliament went on long vacation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have with me a copy of the dates on which they went on vacation, that is, 11 November 2003 till 16 March 2004, which I can table for their enlightenment. They were on vacation for four months! And they come and clamour that we went on long vacation, quite being oblivious to the fact that there has been a change in the calendar year in presenting the Budget and everything has to change and it changed. An Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is disrespectful to the House and to the President of our Republic, I am tempted to say that such is the nature of this Opposition. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the nature of fire is heat, remove heat from fire, it is no longer fire. You have just removed the nature of fire. The nature of fire is heat. Remove demagogy from the Opposition, the Opposition does not exist. The nature of this Opposition is demagogy and, here, pitifully, they live up to their reputation. *Et comme dirait l'autre, M. le président, chassez le naturel et cela revient au grand gallop.* So, as I said, the very nature of their nature has changed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to comment on a couple of issues outlined in the Government Programme and on which I have expressed my views previously. Let me say that the leader of the House, the Prime Minister, Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, gives his backbenchers much latitude and we, being responsible Members, know our limits. This morning itself you have seen hon. Ms Deerpalsing, my friend, hon. Seetaram, hon. Ms Stéphanie Anquetil, hon. Dhiraj Khamajeet and hon. Dr. Hawoldar putting embarrassing questions. Such is the latitude that we are providing. We have got the full right to voice our opinion, to raise issues

which we deem fit, we live according to our conscience and this right we are given; it is the only party perhaps in this country that we are given such latitude. Let me tell you, I fought tooth and nail against the NTPT. I remember on 09 June 2006, the Budget was presented and on 10 June 2006 at 10 a.m., we had a parliamentary meeting of l'*Alliance sociale*. I raised several points against the National Residence Property Tax. We were given the latitude to talk. For about one hour, I canvassed my point regarding the unfairness of this tax. The hon. Prime Minister gave us his blessings to voice out our feelings freely and my friend, hon. Dr. Hawoldar, said it in this House also about the unfairness of this tax. This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say once more, I bow to the traditions of the Labour Party and the understanding of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister who gave me all the latitude to voice my feelings freely on this subject.

I am thankful to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister for having reacted positively to my suggestion thereon. We all know that NRPT is now applicable to only one per cent of taxpayers compared to the original version. I am happy to note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this Government Programme provides for the scrapping of this tax once for all. We cannot compare land at La Laura/Malinga and that of Curepipe Road to be at par, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, among other unfairness. Everybody knows that because of the 36% drop in the price of sugar cane, many planters having one *arpent* of land, had to abandon plantation and then NRPT would have been applied to that barren land and would have to pay Rs50,000 and would have been suicidal. Again, we have to thank the hon. Prime Minister, he took the bold action.

Another issue on which I must express my entire satisfaction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the issue of taxes on bank interest. I know many senior citizens who depend heavily on interest accrued on bank deposits in view of making both ends meet. In line with our strategy to reward the senior citizens of this country for their contribution in shaping the future of this country, the abolition of this tax is indeed a bold step to uplift the plight of these senior citizens and for the population at large.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish with your permission to dwell on a few achievements in the constituency of Quartier Militaire/Moka which I represent as a simple MP. I would like to pay, first of all, a special tribute to the constituents of No. 8 for having recognised my contributions towards the development of the constituency and renewed the confidence in me for the third time.

I reiterate the pledge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this august Assembly to serve them faithfully, diligently, fearlessly and to the best of my ability. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *j'ai milité*

pour l'avancement de ma circonscription et le bien-être de mes mandants et cela, personne - je dis bien personne - ne pourra me le disputer. N'en déplaise à quiconque!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also thankful to the electorate of No. 8 for having supported my two colleagues who are also in this House. We have had a victory where all the three candidates have been returned. I am sure with their help and support, we are well poised to transforming the fate of the inhabitants of Quartier Militaire/Moka. As I have already stated in one of the news bulletin that I use to circulate in my constituency, we will be *à l'écoute, M. le président*, of our constituents constantly and to respond to their grievances in the best manner and to the extent possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has a five-year mandate. We have been elected on the basis of a programme. The electorate will have the opportunity to judge us on the merit of our performance. I can assure them that we will not falter on our pledge. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is befitting on this occasion to highlight some of the achievements during the last five years as well as the upcoming projects for the years to come.

May I hasten to add that some of the projects were earmarked during my last mandate and they are being realised during this term. In the course of a conversation with the hon. Minister of Environment, hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, I took up the issues of some areas of the constituency which I represent wherein development has not been that rapid. Among other villages I mentioned Vuillemin. I must say with great satisfaction that I am happy to note that Vuillemin has been earmarked as an eco-village. An eco-village aims at sustaining the tourism industry, creating green jobs, improving quality of life while, at the same time, preserving and facilitating community self-reliance.

The project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, consists of upgrading of the physical environment, promotion of waste segregation and use of renewal energy for lighting and heating purposes and protection and conservation of biodiversity. My heartfelt thanks to hon. Deva Virahsawmy for his continued support and assistance.

On a personal note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that some sad persons have commented negatively on my achievement reproduced on the Facebook. I wish to state ...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is in the Facebook, yes, we are friends! I wish to state, in no uncertain terms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that these people are simply out of tune with the latest development in technology. They miserably fail to understand that the Facebook is a powerful means of

communication. They seem to be far from knowing the powerful means that the internet provides to interact with our constituents and at no cost. *Il faut renvoyer ces personnes à leurs études.* As a Parliamentarian, you have to be in close contact with your mandates and the mandates must be in a position to voice out their feelings and their views, and this helps me in my task. As a Parliamentarian, I explore all possibilities to come to any possible help to the people whom I represent in Parliament and outside. In-between elections, I do door to door, knocking the doors of several Ministers to have projects realised and to come to the help of my constituents. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Facebook has also become an interface between the public and the Parliamentarians.

It is with a great sense of satisfaction that I wish to mention a few of the projects that have so far been completed. Some are also reaching completion very soon. But before that, let me mention the mega project Verdun/Terre Rouge. It is known as Terre Rouge/Verdun, but partly being in Constituency No. 8, I call it Verdun/Terre Rouge and Verdun/Ebène. This is a mega project. It goes a long way in the decongestion programme of this Government. People, who need to travel to the north, need not go to Port Louis and this saves lots of stress, energy and *devises étrangères aussi.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the constituency which I represent, I have to thank hon. Bachoo for a project which I was fighting since 1995. It was realised this year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Camp Thorel, l'Escalier Branch Road, l'Esperance, Nouvelle Decouverte link roads have now become a reality. People from La Laura, Malenga, l'Avenir, Beau Bois, Ripailles, Nouvelle Decouverte, Eau Bouillie can have access to this road to go to St Julien d'Hotman, Quartier Militaire, St Julien Village, Providence, Montagne Blanche and this saves them about 8 or 9 kilometres and they do this within minutes. This is a very bold step towards decongestion of the road and this road, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was inaugurated on 31 March this year by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, in the presence of hon. Anil Bachoo.

Previously, the link road from Upper Dagotière to Alma was several kilometres long because the then road was not practical for vehicles. The direct link is 202 metres, a stone throw distance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I personally negotiated with the ENL group, got the clearance and we got it prior to election. I stayed quiet. I told my friend, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, that we cannot tell this because it could be wrongly interpreted; we waited for the general election and this road was declared public and it has been asphalted. This project has alleviated the sufferings

of the people of the region. Within minutes, they can connect themselves from Alma to Dagotière and vice versa.

The construction of multi-purpose buildings at St. Pierre, Moka and l'Espérance has gone a long way in meeting the demands of the inhabitants. They are almost completed and are awaiting inauguration.

A plot of land at Dagotière has been identified for the construction of a multi-purpose building and, here, I should like to impress upon my good friend, hon. Aimée, to expedite matters so that this becomes a reality because this project is long overdue; people are waiting for it quite a long time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many more projects are also in the pipeline and they range from the construction of retaining walls at La Terre Coupée, Mont Ory. Work order has already been issued, but some minor details are preventing it to be realised. I should like to appeal to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure to look into it in order to solve the problems.

The work order of the vertical alignment along Moka, Camp de Masque and Flacq Road near Bombay Street - there is an uphill which is the root cause of many accidents - has been issued since last year, but is awaiting clearance from Fuel. Personally, I have written several letters to the sugar estate and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and this also is creating lots of hardship. I know with hon. Anil Bachoo we will not have to wait any further.

In the same breath, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the setting up of *kabrastan*, incineration plants at Circonstance, St Pierre, is being undertaken by the Moka/Flacq District Council.

Regarding the replacement of water conduit from Champ Fouquereaux to Alma, the work order has already been issued. The water pipe from Camp de Masque to Alma is made of asbestos and dates for more than 50 years. It cannot increase the volume of water because it can burst anywhere any time and it creates lots of hardship to the inhabitants of the constituency which I represent. Fortunately, with the help of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, the work order has already been issued and I understand that in January 2011 work will start. I appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister because the flow of water will increase and the reservoir at Alma and Alma Hill is small and they have got to be enlarged so as to increase the capacity of water and this is the source of all problems regarding the distribution of water. In the morning, the reservoir is full and in the afternoon, it is empty; this is what happened at l'Espérance. This is a daily problem. Everywhere we have it. If somebody comes and says that there is no problem of water in my constituency, then that becomes news to me.

There is water problem, but I am made to understand that it will take some 18 months. But, in the meantime, I made an appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, that the distribution of water, wherever the need arises, through the water tank, be a regular process and carried out in a more rational way so as to avoid problems. At times, the drivers go and distribute water in only one place and then the rest of the people in the village get angry. This is what happened at l'Esperance.

The upgrading of road leading from Wooton to Belle Rive has been completed and soon it will be connected to Quartier Militaire. The realignment of the road from Quartier Militaire to St Julien D'Hotman, better known as Higginson Road, will go a long way in ensuring the safety of the road users. I raised this question here and the hon. Minister is positive about it. Let's hope that this project also will be realised. This is just a summary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of some of the projects that have been completed. Many are still at the stage of completion while many more are in the pipeline.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some time back well before the last general election, I had a meeting with the ENL Group, whom I have to thank as they are very collaborative and cooperative, whereby among other projects I took up the advisability of having a Moka bypass, that is, a bypass starting from Apollo Bramwell Hospital going to Verdun. This will spare the road from Moka, Helvetia, Saint Pierre and Verdun which are heavily congested. Prior to the last general election, I had a conversation with my colleague who is now the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, informing him about the meeting I had with the ENL Group. After the general election, we have had a meeting in the office of the Minister of Public Infrastructure which was presided over by him and the three elected members of the Constituency were present and we discussed the project. It will go a long way in decongesting that stretch of the road.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Saint Pierre area is witnessing a serious parking problem. Hopefully, soon a long lasting solution will find daylight. The ENL Group again is considering setting up a commercial centre at Saint Pierre right opposite the market place. This shopping mall will provide for some 300 parking slots and a number of additional facilities. Other areas have not been left unattended, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Projects ranging from shuttle service from the Moka Eye Hospital, Camp Samy, L'Agrément Saint Pierre, Sainte Catherine and many other areas will be affected. That is, the inhabitants of Sainte Catherine to the traffic centre at Saint Pierre which is a long distance and till today there is no bus service, but now with the

coming up of the shuttle service for which tenders have already been floated, will alleviate their suffering and they can easily go to the Moka Eye Hospital or to Camp Samy and to the Saint Pierre traffic centre. The Saint Pierre traffic centre is also slated to go a redesigning because it has witnessed several accidents, out of which there were seven fatal. I raised the matter here in this Assembly and I am happy to say that the Minister is very positive in trying to help out in this.

The construction of footpath, placing of handrails, embellishment programmes, leisure parks, upgrading of football grounds, fencing and lighting of football grounds and of volleyball pitches will also be undertaken in the constituency. Negotiation is on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for a health track and embellishment at Dickson Lake in Upper Dagotièrè with the ENL Group. I recall that some time back a plot of land had been identified in the region between Ripailles and Nouvelle Découverte for the setting up of a football ground. Steps towards obtaining the land have reached a good administrative stage and I will request the hon. Minister of Sports to look into the matter and expedite matters. Again, my humble request goes to the hon. Minister of Sports so that he uses his good offices towards activating matters for the already identified plot of land for a football ground at Quartier Militaire because some ten years ago, the existing football ground was converted into a stadium, and this causes a lot of hardship to youngsters who want to practise football and test matches as they do not have any place as the stadium is not always available. There is a growing interest of the inhabitants to practise football and hence my request that matters be activated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the swimming pool project was mentioned some two years ago in the Budget and is being patiently awaited since then. I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister of Local Government again that if the land identified is not suitable, to consider another site. I can just give a hint here possibly at the Saint Martin Dam at Quartier Militaire itself. There are several acres of land which belong to the District Council. We can have a leisure park, a swimming pool and we can even have the football ground there as well. It is lying idle and so we can make use of it. On many occasions I also impressed in this House for a health track at Le Pouce Road, Petit Verger, Saint Pierre. Several site visits have been conducted and I again appeal to the hon. Minister of Local Government to expedite matters. The construction of a new social welfare centre is imperative to replace the old one which is small and inappropriate for a village like Saint Pierre to carry out the various activities that it is supposed to. I should like to appeal to the hon. Minister Mrs Sheila Bappoo if she could help in having the same one replaced

by a new building and same applies to the community centre at Telfair and Bonne Veine. Let me say here in this House that last year I faced the *Forces Vives* of Côte d'Or, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is a village which is very much aloof and the inhabitants asked for a community centre. There was a hall which was previously used for that purpose, but it was decrepit, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Together with them, we contacted the relevant authorities like the SPLDC. A toilet block was added and the *naco* was replaced by UPDC window panes. The building has been painted and it is awaiting to be vested with the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund so that it could be converted into a community centre for the use of the youngsters, the old and for everybody, men and women alike. This is the wish of the people of Côte d'Or and I wish that this matter be expedited.

Now regarding for the Area Health Centres at Helvetia and Quartier Militaire, I would request for these to be converted into medi clinics with improved infrastructure to provide better services to the inhabitants. I must here inform the House that formerly there was the Moka Hospital which was converted into an eye hospital with the guarantee given then that sooner or later there would be a hospital and I raised this matter several times in this House. I was given to understand that this could not happen and we would not be having it. As we already have health centres at Helvetia and Quartier Militaire, I would request if these could be converted into medi clinics with improved infrastructure to provide facilities to the inhabitants. Moreover, there is a dispensary at Moka which needs some upgrading.

Before ending my exposé, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I need to express my most grateful thanks to many persons who always stood by my side in finding long term solutions to the problems facing my Constituency. Viewed from all angles, I feel that the Governmental Programme answers fully to the requirements of the present day challenges the country faces. It caters for both short term requirements along with keeping a careful eye on the year 2020 and beyond. Such foresightedness is characteristic of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* under the leadership of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, the population can rest assured that the future will be brilliant for generations to come.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am done and I am thankful for your attention.

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.

(6.00 p.m.)

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, first, let me congratulate you for your election as well as the Deputy Speaker. This debate, in fact, gives me an opportunity to put in context some of the various actions and numerous initiatives that my Ministry has taken over the past five months, because the subject is very complex and difficult sometimes to grasp. During my speech, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will try to put into context what we are trying to do and how it fits into the overall picture of things.

Firstly, let me say that I am very sincerely thankful to the Prime Minister for two reasons. One, for having brought the fight against poverty firmly into the electoral agenda during the last election. That was important, because I think nobody else has done it. The hon. Prime Minister has brought it very firmly into the electoral agenda by, amongst other things, indicating that we would, in fact, be creating a specific Ministry for this purpose, and second for giving me the opportunity to head this Ministry.

In fact, I am very thankful for this, and I accepted this Ministry with pleasure. I have read in the press that people were surprised how I could leave tourism and come to poverty alleviation. But I was very happy to make a change. After five years in tourism, I have done a few things. We were happy of what we have done, and it was getting a little bit like routine. I like challenges, and I took this challenge. I am very happy to be here, and it gives me a lot of daily satisfaction.

Later on, we will talk about figures. But poverty is not about figures, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is about people; it is about seeing a smile on somebody's face when you have done something nice, and when they are thankful. That gives me, Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot of satisfaction. In fact, even during my previous mandate as Minister of Tourism, we had, with my colleagues, started some work with money coming from the Tourism Fund. We have worked intensively in Roche Bois; we have worked in a number of NHDCs in Mahebourg, Vallée des Prêtres, Baie du Tombeau, Quatre Bornes itself, and everywhere, to try and better the lives of poor people; we worked especially with the squatters of Cité la Cure. I remember one day we provided them with a big tank of water because they were drinking and bathing in river water, and there were so

many children. With the help of the private sector, we did that. So, even before my present posting, I was happy to help the poor, and now this is, in fact, an even greater opportunity, even a godsend opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to do good.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a target group of people that we want to help, and it is roughly about 26,000 families that can be described as poor; 7,000 of which are in deep poverty, very poor, with a family income of Rs5,000 per family. It is a rough figure; it is not a good figure because the family may be large or small. But, in fact, that is our prime target: the 7,000 families in deep poverty and the 16,000 other families who earn about Rs8,000 or less and who are in relative poverty.

I must say also at the outset, Mr Speaker, Sir, that poverty affects all the communities. We are all in politics and we see that it affects all communities. There may be different percentages - we have to be fair - in each community, but everybody is affected. We have poverty in rural areas, because sometimes people live very far from economic development and can't get a job. That's one reason for poverty. You can get poverty in urban areas where there is such a large concentration of people and again work is a problem.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are having a census at the moment. We have finished the census, and we are just inputting the data. In a week or two, we will have the figures, and that will enable us to have an individual picture, family by family, of the situation as far as poverty is concerned, and then we will be able to apply the policy. I will come to that later. Just to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry is now a dedicated Ministry. You cannot escape from it. You either give results or you don't give results. There is no sort of fudging the issue. There is nothing else to do, but address poverty and poverty related issues. That's the beauty of the Ministry. It's a challenge, and we hope, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we will be able to take up the challenge and bring a positive change in the lives of at least the 7,000 very poor families in Mauritius.

Let me also say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that you cannot treat poverty in a vacuum. It is heavily reliant on the economic situation, because poverty is related to employment or business. You cannot take someone out of poverty just by giving him a pension; that's not my role. You have to provide him with a job, get him to create a business. That depends on the overall economic outlook of Mauritius, which is itself dependent upon the world, and we know that the situation in Mauritius is difficult. I just want to say that we should not just look at things in a vacuum, but in

the context of the performance of the economy as a whole. It has been said that 6% or 7% is the type of growth that we need in order to create real employment in Mauritius. We can see that in a difficult situation we may be far from that figure, but still, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to try. At the moment, unemployment is fairly stable, around 7%, 7.5%; much more female unemployment than male unemployment. In fact, out of the 36,000 unemployed, 23,000 are women. So, we have 75% more women unemployed than men and that is something that we have to address. But, overall, unemployment is fairly stable, around 7%.

We are likely to face next year a difficult period as far as economy is concerned. Mr Speaker, Sir, what is our approach? Our approach has been all along to have an integrated approach. That's the point of the creation of the National Empowerment Foundation, where it regroups all the things that we need to do for the poor areas. Unfortunately, it is like this, the poor do not have a very loud voice. If you are rich, you are on the newspapers, radio or whatever, you have a very good loud voice and people will hear you. But when you are poor, you don't have a voice at all or a very weak voice. It is natural and all around the world it is like that. The poor tend to get overlooked. So many things are happening, and you may not give particular attention to the poor. This is why we have this dedicated Ministry now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry, over the last months, with the National Empowerment Foundation, was created to provide an integrated approach to poverty alleviation, be it housing, infrastructure, jobs, training, caring for children, unemployment. Whatever it is, it can be found at the National Empowerment Foundation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have tried, in adopting this integrated approach, to provide a coherent set of policies which are cost-effective, addressing two types of poverty: chronic and transient poverty. The idea is to get people out of the poverty trap. Because of the situation of your parents, your family, you are trapped here and you do not have enough money, ability, means to get out of the poverty trap, and you need the help of Government to give you this first step up the ladder so that you can continue walking up the ladder.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to break the poverty trap - and I think this has been accepted nationwide - our very great need is to give priority to children. Our first policy measure concerns children. Children from three months to five years, and then turn to eight years because, in fact, there is intergenerational poverty. Children born in poor families don't get the proper education, don't grow up well, and they also end up being poor and having poor children, and so on and so forth.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, in looking at children, *nous sommes en train de préparer l'île Maurice de demain.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, an educated child is a country's greatest asset, and that's what we have to work on. But how do we do it? We do it, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the principle that we have got to look at early childhood. Everything happens in early childhood. After all, you cannot teach old dogs new tricks. I am getting old now, and so it is difficult to change. When I was young, maybe it was easier to change me. The saying is that, after eight years it is already late. That's the principle that we worked on. We want to take children from poor families and help them from three months onwards, give them the good native skills so that they can learn; give them the emotional skills, give them the social skills so that, Mr Speaker, Sir, when they join school at five they are no different from children of other families. That is the idea: to help them in that particular range of their lives to get them on their feet so that when they are five and they sit on the school bench they don't say: 'This child already knows, he speaks French; he already knows how to write English; he already knows a bit of Arithmetic'. If that happens, then you will find that the child regresses. He loses confidence in himself, he loses confidence in the system and then we find, in fact, that the child regresses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let's look at children at an early age. We want to set up nurseries. In fact, we have already set up one or two. But, we want to set up in a very short-term, maybe by January, ten nurseries nicely spread across the country. We want to set up pre-primary schools as well, Mr Speaker, Sir, to take up this challenge of preparing our children for tomorrow. At the same time, in order to be able to man these schools, we are training about 60 babysitters to be able to provide the educational skills that we want. Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not simply just taking care of the kids, we have to provide *un éveil*, we have to provide education, to develop their skills properly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are also liaising with the Ministry of Education in order for the pre-primary schools to open at least till 6 p.m. because, as I said earlier on, a majority of the unemployed are women. In fact, there are 75% more women are on the unemployed list than there are men. That is one issue. If you look at the social security list, you will find that from the 9,000 people who are on social aid, two-third of them are what we call abandoned women, single women. This makes up two-third if you exclude medical cases. There is a real problem with women, single parents and they cannot get a job easily. A mother probably will not want to leave

her child in the street, and should not leave her child and take up employment. They are forced to may be take up just a half-day employment.

Opening up the nurseries in the pre-primary schools till late, I hope, Mr Speaker, Sir, will enable these ladies to find proper work so that they can attend to the needs of their families. I think the Ministry of Education is agreeable to the subject so that we can actually, on an optional basis, allow pre-primary schools to open till late, to allow women to join the workforce and feed their families. There is a number of things that we have been doing, like providing school materials, uniforms, etc. We are doing that on a quite large scale basis and we will continue to do it.

One thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, which I have taken up with my colleague, the Minister of Education, and which we will take up again, is the attitude of teachers towards children. In fact, there was a study made by Dr. Gill on certain aspects of Mauritius. It was basically based in the north of the island. She found that sometimes when children from vulnerable families - whichever community - join the school, straightaway there is a tendency to disregard them, but I must say that it is not something that is deliberate, it is done unconsciously; even sometimes to denigrate and not to take care. Mr Speaker, Sir, we do many things, we spend a lot of money, but we need also to train people to be more caring to these children when they join schools, especially now that we are taking them from an early age.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have noticed also that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare as well as the Ministry of Education are starting *l'école des parents*, which is a very good thing. Because, on the other hand, when we release them back to their households, they have got to be taken care of. I think I have, more or less, shown how much a priority children are to my Ministry and, over the next few months and years, we will take even greater care of our children and in this way *préparer l'île Maurice de demain*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot say that you are taking somebody out of poverty without giving him a job. If you don't give him a job then, as I mentioned earlier, you have not really done much, you have just sort of helping him on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, finding jobs for the poor, finding jobs for the unemployed is a major objective of our Ministry. I have mentioned earlier during Question Time that last year we have probably trained and placed 1,800 people in various jobs and we pay 50% of their salaries and 60% of their training cost. That is what we do for the first six months generally. Next year, we want to double that to at least reach 4,000 heads of families. We are trying to pull them out of poverty by giving them a proper job. Not all these

people are in deep poverty, but we are conscious that we are trying to help them at least to get a decent job. In fact, that is a major challenge. But there is more than that, Mr Speaker, Sir, because there is lot of informal work in Mauritius. If you see somebody who is poor - generally speaking, we all receive the public - and you ask them: what work do you do? They say: “Ayo, *I am a manoeuvre maçon*”. All of them say: ‘I work on a *camion*’, ‘I am a *manoeuvre maçon*’, ‘I work two or three days a week’. We have wanted to address this issue of these casual workers, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are actually training about a hundred people; from ‘*manoeuvre maçon*’ we want to make them become ‘*maçon*’ and therefore have a *métier* and end up with having a certificate at the end of the day. It is called recognition of prior learning. We are not taking school children now, we are taking people who, maybe, have worked for years, but they have never got the formal training. It is like a ‘*tireur de plan*’ - an architect - they don’t have the formal training and they never get there. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to expand on this project and, hopefully, prepare many more people and develop with the IVTB this recognition of prior learning. It can be anything; it can be in the kitchen, it can be an electrician, it can be so many things that people do. They have learnt *sur le tas*, but because they don’t have a formal training, they are not able to take full advantage of their own skills. They do not have the right skills to earn a decent living and feed properly their families.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question of land also. We are trying to find land with the Ministry of Agriculture and to encourage people to form cooperatives and plough the land, because some people are more keen for agriculture than others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a new project which I want to mention and this concerns a project called ‘SMS jobs’. What we want to do is to set up a special number at the NEF where you can send an SMS. It is very easy. If you need a job, you just send an SMS and say ‘I am a gardener, I need a job’ and, at the same time, if you can provide employment to somebody, you send a similar SMS to the same phone number and, hopefully then, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the NEF we can correlate the two and be the go-between for those seeking employment and those trying to find employees.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is this question of Certificate of Morality. It is regrettable that it takes so long to, firstly, obtain a Certificate of Morality and, secondly, that it has only a validity of about six months. Government is looking at all this, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to provide, first of all, a rapid service because nobody is going to wait two months for you to get your Certificate of Morality. It is very unfair also as it can be only the poor who have to get a

Certificate of Morality. We must try to get it to them quicker and maybe for the duration to be longer, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking about jobs. Some people will find it always difficult to get jobs. Who is going to employ an ex-convict? Who is going to employ an ex-drug addict? It is very difficult. We are human beings and, given a choice, we may not employ these people. What do we do with these people? The rate of reoffending and the rate of maybe falling back again into drugs could be related to what happens when you leave prison or what happens when you leave drugs. Do you find employment? Can you live with dignity or are you back, Mr Speaker, Sir, *dans canal*? This is the issue. We have been talking to various people and we want to develop a kind of social entrepreneurship. People who are likely to do business, they must know how to do business. That is the problem. They can actually do business, but not purely with the profit motive. These days, we are working on one particular project, but there will be, hopefully, others where, in fact, we want, with the help of companies, to help and it is good for the environment. With the Ministry of Environment, we want to encourage the production of paper bags. To replace the plastic bags, we will have paper bags. It can be subsidised by some companies, but these paper bags, Mr Speaker, Sir, would then be made by these long term vulnerable groups. They would not just be made – maybe one or two – outside, but the point of my Ministry in getting into it is that we would like these paper bags and other things like that - we can talk about livestock feeds and a lot of other issues - be made by people in the long term vulnerable groups. In that way, Mr Speaker, Sir, we would be protecting our children in a way because if prisoners don't reoffend, then it is better for the whole of our society. This depends, of course, on the role of social entrepreneurs and NGOs who need to have good business acumen, otherwise there would just be *faillite*. You need to have, in fact, good business acumen.

Some of the other types of people who are long term unemployed are the handicapped. It is sad sometimes that the handicapped suffer twice; once by being handicapped, if I may say so, and the second, by being poor and unemployed. I know that the Ministry of Social Security has undergone a publicity campaign to encourage handicapped people to register with them because the law actually provides that everybody who employs more than 35 people must take, on its payroll, 3% of handicapped people, but nobody respects that in Mauritius. Firstly, because there is no proper roll and register of handicapped and secondly, because it has not been enforced. We want to try, Mr Speaker, Sir, to enforce this and get handicapped people to work. In fact, what we say is employing a handicapped person is a *bénédiction*. It is not the other way, some people

hesitate. It is a *bénédiction*. It is good for your company and this is the message that the Ministry of Social Security is putting through, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are trying to get people to employ handicapped people, but there are other areas also that we are looking at, like working from home, fair trade, etc. The whole thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, hinges on the fact that it is important to create job opportunities for people. How do we get them out of the poverty track? It is to give them the training that is necessary for them to obtain employment. We don't want to give them a sinecure. It is not a job for not doing anything. You have to be able to do something to earn your living. You have to be trained for that and you have also to have the job opportunity. Therefore, the training and placement go hand in hand in that scheme. Mr Speaker, Sir, later on I will talk a bit about the social contract and the need for people also to respect the whole change that we want to effect.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the objectives of my Ministry is to enable every Mauritian household to live in dignity. We are not talking about making people rich, but dignity, Mr Speaker, Sir; having electricity, water, a reasonable house that will withstand a cyclone. This is the basics, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a newly developed nation. We ought to be able to provide to our fellow inhabitants who are less lucky than we are. One of the objectives of the National Empowerment Foundation is to provide *un toit* for people. Now, we have two types. One is creating the so-called Model Estates for people like La Valette, Cité Lumière and one in Rodrigues under construction and project. We are also constructing houses on individual plots of land belonging to the poor persons or to their families. In fact, up to now, what we have done is we have constructed CIS housing - corrugated iron sheets housing. They don't look nice at all, they are very uncomfortable, it is very hot during the day and God knows what will happen if we have a bad cyclone. I mean how many of these would be left because they are actually made by the persons themselves or the neighbour gives a hand and we give a bit of money for that. We are looking at the possibility, Mr Speaker, Sir, of doing what we do in Rodrigues. It is nice to know that in some way Rodrigues is better off. Rodriguans are better off than Mauritians because in Rodrigues we don't build CIS houses; we build houses in cement and block with a corrugated iron roof and that is much nicer for the environment. It is nicer to look at and nicer for the neighbours and it is much more comfortable for the person.

Mr Speaker, Sir this is what we want to do. It is not much more expensive; it will be better controlled. There would be less chance of playing around because we are just giving the money. There might be a chance of corruption; there have been cases. When we construct it

ourselves, it may be a little bit more expensive, and this is what we want to go for. We want to stop with CIS housing and provide a small house, but better living conditions to the very poor, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Also, there is the construction of these housing estates. In fact, we only deal with the very poor; we are talking about families of less than Rs5,000. There is no point in offering them a house of Rs5,000; it is just like if you would tell them to go and live in Buckingham Castle, they can't afford it; they will never be able to afford it. We need to be able to provide cheap housing to people. When they will get some money, they will construct a bit more and they will go on like that. But the cost is extremely important for the type of target group that we are talking about.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, it must be allocated fairly; that is one thing. But then, there is also the question of constructing what and where. Do you construct a housing estate or do you construct a community? How big is the housing estate? If you want to construct 300 houses in advance, it may straightaway be a ghetto, especially if you are talking about this sort of target group. We have been thinking, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have not finished with that; we have planned, encouraging ourselves, the private sector and rich donors. People give us land. Someone gave us two portions of land; someone gave us money to construct houses. So, it may not always be public money. Being able to construct houses on small plot - 10, 15, 20 to 30 houses - then, we can talk about social integration. They would immediately be integrated into the community because it is not a big group and the infrastructure that is necessary is much less than for the big group. The size is important.

As we are doing at La Valette, we are going to do it at Dubreuil. We want to construct communities and, at Dubreuil, we have asked for six plots of land where we are going to build other things than just houses like a social hall, shops, recreational facilities and at La Valette, I am pleased to say that we have just opened a *jardin d'enfants*. This week we are building temporary premises for shops because they do not have any shops there and then we are going to build temporary market stalls for them to at least enable some sort of community to develop in La Valette and that will go further through the nurseries for kids that we will develop. The idea, Mr Speaker, Sir, therefore, is to create not housing estates, but communities for people to work at and everything will thus come through social contract. You don't get into a housing estate without a social contact and I will come to that in a moment, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are going to deliver the houses at Cité Lumière by the end of the year and we have done quite a bit of work in

African Town and in Dubreuil so that people know that we have finished with the planning - I am talking about the ex-squatters of Dubreuil. We have appointed the Mauritius Housing Company as the project manager and hopefully they will go very quickly with the project, calling for tenders and construction of these core houses for the people at Dubreuil, Mr Speaker, Sir.

But I must say that while talking on this subject, I am very pleased to be able to connect, with the help of the CEB and the CWA, 65 houses behind Cité La Cure to electricity and water. It is thanks to the Members of Parliament, Mr Speaker, Sir. For 11 years these people, who actually are lessees of their lands, did not have the financial means to connect themselves to electricity and water. It cost Rs1.4 m., but it is not a lot of money for the hardship that has been alleviated. I am very happy and we are going to extend it because, as I mentioned earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is our duty, as a nation, to ensure that every family lives in dignity and is able to have access to basic clean water and electricity.

Mr Speaker Sir, we say that poverty *est l'affaire de tous* so one of our roles is to encourage other Ministries and parastatal bodies to go along that line and adopt pro-poor policies. We are happy that we are working again with the CEB and my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, to enable the installation on a pilot basis, hopefully to be extended after, of prepaid electricity metres. We receive the public and we all know that there are old ladies, poor people and they allow their electricity bills to exceed a certain amount. There is no way that they can repay that. If you go on a prepaid basis, the idea is at least that you are going to manage better. When you have Rs100, you buy electricity for Rs100. It is like the mobile phone. 93% of users are actually using a prepaid card for the mobile phone. Mauritians prefer to pay as you go. I don't have that, but most people have a prepaid phone and, hopefully, Mr Speaker, Sir, the prepaid electricity metre, which is very technologically advanced, will not only help the CEB to manage the metres, but also enable the poor to better afford electricity. That is why we are working at it. We are working also with the NHDC in respect of the recovery charges to encourage other parastatal bodies to adopt pro-poor policies. We consider that it is one of our roles at the Ministry and at the NEF.

Mr Speaker, Sir, very often we meet poor people who have actually given up hope. They adopted such a bad behaviour maybe because they have fallen into alcohol or drugs or they may just not have real initiative in life. Changing of behaviour among the poor is an important aspect of the workers at the National Empowerment Foundation and this is why we have a social contract for the housing estates. In our social contract, for instance, they will not have loud

music, they will send their children to school, they will seek a job and these things are absolutely necessary. You will be surprised, Mr Speaker, Sir, to know that in Dubreuil we did our social survey and we found that there were 9 people unemployed. There were nine heads of families unemployed and we came up to the men and we offered them jobs, but only one took up the job and the eight others have not. In a way, can you expect the Government to go through all this expenses, provide all this and they are squatters? We give them a job and they don't take the job. So, there is a social contract. I am not saying that we are going to do as in UK, but I am saying that we need to have a social contract. When the Government does something, there must be behavioural change and you must add your own effort yourself to be able to come up the ladder. We have a social contract at La Valette and we will have one at Dubreuil and everywhere that will be necessary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there must be a change in behaviour. We are having courses on life skills and debt management. How many people cannot manage debts? As soon as they see a shop open with hire purchase, they go and buy everything there and the next day they are bankrupt. We need life skills in order not to have alcohol abuse, drug abuse, even problems in the family and all that. We have courses and we will be intensifying our courses in life skills training. We will also come with the family planning. It is important because there are sometimes very large families and people do not act responsibly. Parents do not act responsibly and afterwards the problems are there and the children really suffer because there is so much income. All of us know that with so much income, you can have so many children. If you don't have that, there is an imbalance and we have all type of problems with children in Mauritius which my colleague, hon. Mrs Bappoo, is dealing with. So, family planning is also an important issue *pour responsabiliser les parents* and the would-be parents as to the appropriate family size.

Secondly, providing *en proximité* the contraceptives that are necessary because there is a cost, as hon. Ms Deerpalsing raised it up when we did the launching at Quatre Bornes. There is a cost on contraceptives and you have to take your car and go to the pharmacy to buy it, but not everybody can afford this. We bring it closer to the person, we talk to the person and that is important. We are not working only with the Family Planning, we will be working closely with the Ministry of Health and with *Action Familiale* because different people have different choices.

Change in behaviour is important, Mr Speaker, Sir. Change in behaviour in how we view the poor also and this is why we have asked, during the International Day of Poverty, well-off

people to invite the poor. You have to change your behaviour toward the poor because many of them are trying to get out of it and they just need encouragement and help. In a few days, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a ship coming from France called *Défi Intégration*. I would not do it myself, but this ship is a sailing ship and has got six cruises - four able-bodied and two handicapped persons. This shows also *notre regard sur les autres*, how we should view and I hope that this will be one of the catalysts that people should not view handicapped people in a negative way, if they can sail from France to here and they are having races and all sort of things now. We should view the handicapped with *un autre oeil*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

A few more things to say is our need to identify talents in the country. We tend to think - it is very Mauritian - that academic consideration is top. It is very important that you can write and speak French and English. If you can't read French, you are not clever. But so many other talents exist whether it is sports, music, art, dancing, whatever you like. So many other talents exist in a human being and we want to identify them. That is why, with the Ministry of Sports, we have started the street football, not only for leisure and competitiveness that they give in the human being, but also because it enables us to identify talents. We will be starting a project which is called health systema which, in fact, with the help of the private sector, we will try to find and identify young musicians among the very poor and help them become famous people, singers, and dancers. There is a famous guy called Abed Chaudhury who is a very good scientist. In fact, in his own country, he has started a programme to identify talents amongst the poor and we want to try to do that, to have a type of caravan. We will try to go in the poor areas and see who can do what and if he is a good artist, if he can paint well, maybe we can post him with Vaco Baissac and give him the chance to improve himself. Therefore identifying the hunt for young talents is important for us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, CSR is a brilliant initiative from the last Government. I have always supported it and being able to say to the private sector that there is 2% of taxation, but we will actually let them spend it, divert it through their foundation or through an NGO, spend it where it needs to be. It gets rid of the red tape of Government. It puts in the passion because we are trying to encourage the private sector to invest or spend on things that they are passionate about. That is important because when you are passionate about something, you will get it done.

Thirdly, this intermingling of the private sector and the NGO's brings more professionalism to the NGO sector. You get money, you have passion, you have professionalism

and you are likely going to have a very good outcome and that is the beauty of CSR. Of course, it has to be improved. It has to be made better. It has to be well spread geographically as well as across projects. It is one of the reasons why we had the *espace* CSR some months ago which we are doing again. I must say, Mr Speaker, we work very actively with NGOs which come to us very readily. People with money come to us and NGOs also. We try to get the two together. We have worked the first *étape* Bois Marchand. We have worked with *l'Association Ste famille* to help their school there. We have worked with *Mouvement Solidarité Maman* at Cité Père Laval for the new nursery - *crèche*. We have worked with the Lions Club for the rehabilitation of houses which have become derelict and for the construction of new houses. We are talking about a hundred houses and we have worked with Alain Auriant, the Association in Rose Belle for the construction of houses, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have worked with NGOs for adult literacy, help children, day care centres, etc. We are here to provide the support NGOs needs.

I will speak very quickly, Mr Speaker, Sir, on Rodrigues. I mentioned one area where at least Rodrigues is doing well as far as the housing is concerned, although there may be a battle, but still it is happening there. In fact there, not only we provide the house, but also a water tank so that they can capture rain water. We are developing a housing project *intégré* somewhere called Jardin Mamzelle and there, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will be building 12 houses. In fact, all the programmes that we have in Mauritius are replicated in Rodrigues and I must say that some of the programmes are more successful in Rodrigues. I must say that quite frankly. There is a better understanding. There is this artisanat well developed there and some of the projects that we do in Rodrigues are more satisfying, are more cost-effective than what we do in Mauritius, but obviously in Rodrigues there is a high percentage of poor people. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one particular project which the NEF is very proud of. It is *la Compagnie des Artisans Rodriguais* which employs about 80 women and they make all sorts of handicrafts.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are thinking of having a Rodrigues desk to assist Rodriguans who are migrating to Mauritius. That is important. We work together because we need to assist Rodriguans who are migrating to Mauritius in finding employment, in finding decent housing because, as we know, one of the problems of squatting is the fact that Rodriguans come here and sometimes they do not have decent housing and are forced to adopt this mode of living.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning new approach to poverty alleviation, at present, we have adopted a broad-brush approach, but we did a census some months back. We are now processing and putting 7,000 families in a database; we are going to have individual information on each family. I'll be able to tell Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many houses are necessary, in what area, how many children are there in the families, how many are going to school and how many are not going to school. I'll be able to tell them how many families have electricity, how many families have tap water. Mr Speaker, Sir, we will have this sort of information on a database and it will provide us with information to be able to get our policies right. No longer the broad-brush approach said this as there is the programme for *aide-maçons* because we think there are many *aide-maçons*. We think so. There are site works. From now on, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will be able to provide more precise help where it is necessary geographically as well. It may be that in Riambel we may need to talk to the Board of Investment because there is not enough investment in that region and people are unemployed for geographical reasons. It may be that there is a terrible housing problem in some constituencies, etc.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the housing census, is going to be a watershed. It will enable us to provide much more precise and up-to-date policies dealing on a demand-based basis with the needs of the poor and we will be going with that information to the assizes probably in February to assuredly propose a new set of policies. Mr Speaker, *la pauvreté c'est l'affaire de tous*, we cannot leave it to the ten persons who are at the Ministry of Social Integration. We cannot leave to the hundred persons who are at the NEF or the NGOs. It is all our concern. In fact, we set up a ministerial committee recently to deal so that we can assuredly get all the Ministries coordinating their approach, but it is not a Government issue, it is a human being issue. Mr Speaker, Sir, our Ministry has been trying to encourage all the Mauritians to participate in the fight against poverty and I have been very happy. As I mentioned to you – I don't give his name, one person came up and gave the NEF 50 perches of terrain at Roches Noires, not on the sea, on the other side, at the village of Roche Noire and he said: 'Look construct some housing there'. Yesterday, one famous bank came up and said: 'Look our CSR is so much, it is not a lot, but our group worldwide makes a lot of money. We are going to put up between Rs6 m. and Rs10 m. of money which is not CSR money at the disposal of the Government for poverty alleviation and the environment. We talked about this paper bag project and other projects as well. So people are

coming forward and that is what is beautiful. There is another company in the financial services sector which is going to double this 2% CSR and will make it 4%. I must say it is all hunky-dory, but somewhere along the line, people are coming to the Ministry, the NEF, the Government to say that they are willing to do that a little bit more. This is really what we are asking and this is *le message de la fin*, Mr Speaker Sir.

It is firstly for me to thank all the thousands of volunteers. My thanks to all thousands of volunteers who work, most of the cases, without any publicity, just through their own personal satisfaction, they help people who are in need, Mr Speaker, Sir. Thanks to all the people who are working hard at the NEF, at my Ministry. Thanks to all my colleagues here in Government and in the *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* for helping in every way that they can with this whole policy of alleviation of poverty.

In fact, at the end of the day, it is not what you see on paper that matters, it is *sur le terrain*. We can ask any PQ, Mr Speaker, Sir, it always sounds wonderful whenever you answer a PQ, but what happens *sur le terrain*? This is why today I said quite honestly - I think it was to hon. Mrs Labelle - that we are going to have a monitoring of what we do. I am not interested only to see what is on paper, it looks nice, very well, but we need to see that, at the point of sale, when we deal with the poor, we are providing the right sort of training course; we are providing the right sort of housing; the right sort of education, of jobs, of infrastructure at the best possible cost price to Government and to the CSR. Mr Speaker, Sir, our work will not be on paper, it will be judged on how we have, in fact, changed the life of real people living in poverty all across Mauritius and therefore it is *sur le terrain*, Mr Speaker, Sir, that you will have to judge us.

Finally, it is win-win-win, Mr Speaker, Sir; poverty alleviation benefits everybody. That is *le mot de la fin*. Obviously it's a win for the poor first, of course, because they are actually living a better life and that is excellent, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is a win also for the investors coming into this country. When you invest in a country, you invest in stability, you don't want to have riots outside, you don't want to have unrest. You want to have stability. You want to be able to drive your car without a bodyguard and so it is a win for the investor, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is a win also for the businessman because there is a lot of writing on this. When the size of a local market increases, you can sell your goods to more people. That is also a win and above all, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a win for society because we all live in Mauritius and we all want to live in a better

Mauritius. I will finish by asking the help of all my colleagues here in Parliament so that we actually create a better Mauritius. Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 11 November at 3.30 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

- (i) ST LOUIS ROAD, QUATRE BORNES - ONE-WAY STREET
- (ii) NHDC, PALMA – GRASS CUTTING
- (iii) NAVIN'S SOONARANE GYMNASIUM - CONTRACT

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two brief issues to raise. One concerns the Minister of Public Infrastructure. In St Louis, Quatre Bornes, there were petitions for a road to be converted into a one-way street. I know that hon. Duval also has been there. I have been there several times, and I have talked to the Traffic Management Unit.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he could expedite the conversion of the St Louis road into a one-way street.

The second issue that I would like to raise concerns the Ministry of Housing. I have raised it in this House in the previous sessions, and it concerns the NHDC Palma. I guess this is the case in all the NHDC estates. There is a legal imbroglio, because the Municipality cannot go in to cut the grass and, therefore, we have always asked for an arrangement between the Municipality and the NHDC estate, so that the grass is cut regularly so as not to have health

hazards like Chikungunya and other diseases that can spring up in these places. But every time we have an *ad hoc* agreement, if either hon. Duval or I don't monitor this, it falls by the wayside. Months go by and the grass doesn't get cut. Then, we have to put pressure and have another *ad hoc* agreement and so on and so forth.

My appeal to both the hon. Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Housing is to come up with a sort of permanent agreement - I guess it does not concern only my constituency - so that grass should be cut regularly by whatever means in the NHDC estates.

If you allow me, I have one last issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, which concerns the hon. Minister of Local Government. I think the hon. Minister has probably been apprised of the questions that were put by our Municipal Councillors on the Navin Soonarane gym. There has been a lot of questions put and there is a lot *zones d'ombre* on the contract. The person did the contract for this gym for Rs33 m. This is supposed to be a brand new gym; it is leaking and there are all kinds of defaults. It is really outrageous. May I ask the hon. Minister of Local Government to institute a Fact Finding Committee? Because this is unacceptable for a brand new gym that has cost Rs33 m. I think there is still a bit of payment left. We should withhold those payments and make sure that whatever has been on the contract is delivered. We should institute a Fact Finding Committee to see where, in the administration, the fault lies, what was promised to be delivered for Rs33 m. that has not been delivered or has been delivered with faults.

The Minister of Public infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding St Louis Road, I would like to assure the hon. Member that the needful will be done within a week or so.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): I assure the hon. Member that I will make sure that the grasses are cut properly.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am already aware of the problem at the Navin Soonarane Gymnasium. In fact, there is a problem with the generator also. I will look into it.

CAMP DE MASQUE PAVE - WATER SUPPLY

Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to severe water shortages in the region of Camp de Masque Pavé, Petite Cabane, Camp de Masque Balance John, Unité. There has been a complaint on the day of Divali, and incidentally the inhabitants of the region have voiced out their frustration concerning the recurrent water problem. Such frustrating aspect does impact on their daily livelihood, and I would wish the hon. Minister could attend to such complaint so that things may be remedied as soon as possible.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): If we could meet as soon as possible so that I can look at all the aspects of the problem and find a solution as quickly as possible.

At 6.57 p.m. the sitting was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 11 November 2010 at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

COMMISSION FOR THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE ECONOMY – CHAIRPERSON – OVERSEAS MISSION

(No. 1B/533) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the number of overseas missions undertaken by the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, since July 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case, the -

- (a) countries visited and duration of stay;
- (b) purpose of the visit, indicating the outcome;
- (c) composition of the delegation, if any, and
- (d) total amount of *per diem* allowances, including all other travelling

benefits, allowances and fees.

Reply: I am informed by the Chairperson of the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy that, in their capacity as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Commission, neither of them has proceeded on overseas mission since July 2005 to date.

The other parts of the question, therefore, do not arise.

INVESTORS, SELF-EMPLOYED NON- CITIZENS AND RETIRED NON-CITIZENS - PERMANENT RESIDENCE

(No. 1B/534) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the investors, self-employed non-citizens and the retired non-citizens, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the number thereof, in each case, who have applied for a permanent residence valid for a period of ten years as from the expiry date of their occupation permit or residence permit, as the case may be, under the provisions of the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provision) Act, since 1 October 2009

Reply: The Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 provides for the issue of an Occupation Permit or a Residence Permit in three working days to four categories of non-citizens, namely investors, self-employed, professionals and retired persons. The main objective of this Act is to attract foreign direct investment, foreign talents and technology.

The Act also provides that after completion of three years such categories of non-citizens are eligible to apply for Permanent Residence Permit for 10 years, provided they meet the relevant criteria as follows -

- investor with an annual turnover of Rs15 million over three consecutive years;
- self-employed with an annual income of Rs3 million over three consecutive years;
- retired non-citizens who transfer annually at least US \$40,000 or its equivalent in convertible foreign currency over three consecutive years, and

- professionals drawing a monthly salary of Rs150,000 over three consecutive years.

Since the coming into force of the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act in October 2006, to date, a total of 7242 occupation permits and 660 residence permits have already been issued under this scheme.

The grant of a Permanent Residence Permit for a period of 10 years will give the opportunity to the non-citizen to acquire an immovable property. Since the coming into operation of the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, we have witnessed the sale of numerous properties to foreigners. Given that land is a scarce resource, we are reviewing the policy of acquisition of land by non-citizen.

In the meantime, the Occupation Permits or Residence Permits of those non-citizens who have completed three years are being renewed.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – 2009-2010 REPORT

(No. 1B/535) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Human Rights Commission, information as to -

- (a) when the 2009-2010 report will be tabled;
- (b) the number of cases which have been heard over the period March 2009 to date, and
- (c) if complaint forms are still being delivered thereat.

Reply: In my replies to previous Parliamentary Questions 1B/1255 and 1B/266 of 01 December 2009 and 13 July 2010 respectively, I informed the House that the structure and functioning of the National Human Rights Commission were being reviewed with a view to broadening its mandate and strengthening its efficiency.

Consultations have been held to that effect at the level of my Office with the Office of the Solicitor-General and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. A draft Bill is being finalised.

The draft report for 2009 has been prepared and is being finalised.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that for the period March 2009 to 04 November 2010, 280 complaints have been received and investigated by the Commission. Some 200 cases have been disposed of, about 62 cases have been referred to other institutions and 18 cases are awaiting hearing.

Regarding part(c), complaint forms are filled by any person alleging that his human rights, have been, are being or is likely to be violated. The forms are still being delivered at the Commission and can also be downloaded from its website.

POLICE OFFICERS – RISK ALLOWANCE

(No. 1B/536) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the risk allowance, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it is envisaged to extend the payment thereof to Police Officers working as Orderlies, in view of the fact that by nature of their duties, they are called to deal with and escort prisoners and if not, why not.

Reply: The payment of risk allowance to Police Officers is governed by paragraphs 14.1.12 and 14.1.13 of the PRB Report 2008 and the PRB Errors, Omissions and Clarifications Report 2009. A monthly risk allowance equivalent to one and a half increments at the initial point of the relevant salary scale subject to a maximum of Rs 600, is paid to Police Officers who are posted at the CID, ERS, Police Stations and those on the frontline working on shift or performing operations duties involving higher than normal risk associated with the nature of their work.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Court Orderlies, are posted at the Prosecutor Office and perform duties from 08 30 hours to 16 30 hours. They are therefore not involved in the shift system nor do they perform operational duties.

The Court Orderlies do occasionally escort prisoners but, this is limited to non-dangerous or non-violent prisoners. In situations where dangerous or violent prisoners are to be escorted, Police Officers from the Divisional Support Unit, the Special Support Unit (SSU), the *Groupement d'Intervention de la Police Mauricienne* (GIPM) or the Special Mobile Force are called upon to perform such duties, depending on the risk assessment.

Consequently, the Court Orderlies are not eligible for risk allowance.

DRUG ASSETS FORFEITURE - COMMISSIONER - APPOINTMENT

(No. 1B/537) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Commissioner for the Drug Assets Forfeiture, he will state the -

(a) name of the incumbent, indicating the

(i) salary drawn and other terms and conditions of appointment, and (ii) date of his appointment, and

(b) number of assets seized from drug dealers over the past five years,

indicating the quantum thereof in each case.

Reply: The Commissioner for the Drug Assets Forfeiture is Mr S. Nunkoo. I am tabling the information requested for at (a)(i) and (a)(ii).

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner, Drug Assets Forfeiture, that since his appointment in December 2005, he has dealt with 1,407 cases for the forfeiture of drug assets. Currently, enquiry is being carried out in 233 other cases.

I am advised that under section 45 of the Dangerous Drugs Act, the Commissioner has to refer the outcome of his enquiry to the Director of Public Prosecutions by way of a written report. The nature of that report will determine whether an application will be made for the forfeiture of the assets obtained from drug activities. I am also informed that over the past five years, forfeiture of assets was obtained in one case in July 2008 where a sum of Rs 112,500.97 was forfeited.

The present legal framework is inadequate to deal with the seizure of assets acquired from criminal action. We need a new approach to address in a more efficient manner such criminal activities. In this context, and as announced in the Government Programme, a Draft Asset Recovery Bill has already been prepared by the Attorney-General's Office. The draft Bill provides for the recovery of assets which are proceeds or instrumentalities of crime or terrorist property, even in the absence of a criminal conviction. The Bill will also address the present difficulty that is being encountered by the authorities when dealing with cases where the tainted assets have been transferred in the name of third parties.

An Enforcement Authority, which will be headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions himself, will be set up and it may apply to the Supreme Court for a retrieval or Recovery Order, seek a Restraining or Restriction Order from the Judge in Chambers in relation to property or other economic advantage.

The consultation exercise is underway and the draft Bill will be introduced in the Parliament as soon as it will be finalised.

The new legal framework will be a step forward in the relentless fight of Government against drug trafficking.

VAISH WELFARE ASSOCIATION – MINISTER OF ARTS & CULTURE - SPEECH

(No. 1B/538) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any complaint has been registered in relation to the speech made by the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Vaish Welfare Association at D'Epina and if so, if an inquiry has been carried thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 23 September 2010 an inhabitant of Idriss Goomanee Street, Rose Hill made a declaration at Rose Hill Police Station in relation to the speech made by the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture on 29 August 2010 at D'Epina.

Both the Police and the Independent Broadcasting Authority are enquiring into the matter.

SERGEANT – PROMOTION TO INSPECTOR

(No. 1B/539) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the promotion exercise of Police Officers in the grade of Sergeant to that of Inspector, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it has now been completed and if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the administrative procedure to enable the implementation of the promotion exercise has not been completed. Promotion from the rank of Sergeant to Inspector will follow shortly.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – MARINE PROTECTED AREA

(No. 1B/540) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Archipelago, he will state when the Mauritian Government last raised the issue with the Government of the United Kingdom, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: Since the launching by the British Government on 10 November 2009 of a public consultation on the proposal for the creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago, the Government of Mauritius has conveyed on several occasions its opposition to the project. It had also requested the British Government to stop the public consultation it had launched and to withdraw the Consultation Document of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office which was unilateral and prejudicial to the interests of Mauritius. The British Government did not halt the public consultation but instead extended its deadline despite the assurances given to me by the Former British Prime Minister at the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that the creation of the marine protected area would be put on hold and discussed within the framework of the bilateral talks between Mauritius and UK.

On 01 April 2010, the British Government unilaterally decided to create a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago allegedly to protect the marine environment. The marine protected area includes a “no-take” marine reserve where commercial fishing is banned, but excludes Diego Garcia from its coverage.

On 02 April 2010, the Government of Mauritius informed the British Government, by way of a note of protest, of its strong objection to the unilateral creation by the UK of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago and its decision not to recognise the existence of the marine protected area.

On 13 April 2010, the British High Commission responded to the note of protest by way of a Note Verbale. While taking note of the objection of the Government of Mauritius to the creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago, the UK emphasized that the establishment of a marine protected area does not change its commitment to cede the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer needed for defence purposes. It also pointed out that this decision is without prejudice to the outcome of the case brought by Mr BANCOULT before the European Court of Human Rights. The UK added that it intends to continue working closely with all interested stakeholders, both in the UK and internationally, towards implementing the marine protected area.

The creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago in disregard of the sovereignty of Mauritius over the territory is totally unacceptable to the Government of Mauritius as it prevents the use by Mauritius of the fisheries and other marine resources of the ocean around the Chagos Archipelago in the exercise of its sovereignty rights. It also constitutes a serious impediment to the eventual resettlement of the Mauritians of Chagossian origin who were forcibly evicted from the Chagos Archipelago to pave the way for the establishment of a military base in Diego Garcia.

Following the change in Government in the UK last May, I had a meeting in London with the Rt. hon. William Hague, the UK Foreign Secretary on 03 June 2010. I expressed concern about the decision of the former UK Government to establish a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago and added that the decision of the former UK Government is tainted with illegality.

The UK Foreign Secretary informed me that he would revert to me as he was not fully conversant with all issues regarding the Chagos Archipelago.

It was also proposed that a meeting be held between hon. Henry Bellingham, Minister for Africa and Overseas Territories at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to discuss the way forward on the Chagos Archipelago issue.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had a meeting with hon. Bellingham on 22 July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda in the margins of the AU Executive Council meeting. During the meeting, Minister Boolell reiterated the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago as well as our objection to the unilateral establishment by the UK of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago. In response, Minister Bellingham indicated that the new British Government would have handled the issue of the marine protected area differently.

It is now clear that the new British Government does not hold a different view from the previous Government on the issue of the marine protected area or on the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago.

In the circumstances, the Government of Mauritius is now considering other options to counter the unilateral establishment by the UK Government of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago and for Mauritius to exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

MINORS – SEXUAL ASSAULT – REPORTED CASES

(No. 1B/541) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to sexual assault on minors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

- (a) number of reported cases thereof, since July 2006 to-date, and
- (b) actions taken to address same and the additional ones, if any, that are being envisaged.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from July 2006 to 04 November 2010, 928 cases of sexual offences committed on minors have been reported to the Police.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police Family Protection Unit and the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* carry out sensitization campaigns with women and children on sexual abuse issues including the aspect of protective behaviours and personal safety. Pupils of primary and secondary schools are targeted by such campaigns and over 56,000 students have been sensitized. A Protective Behaviour Programme is being carried out by Police for primary school children explaining to them about good and bad touch. Sensitization campaigns have also been carried out through the media to enhance awareness of members of the public in general.

The House will appreciate that parents themselves have a vital role to play in sensitizing their children thus supporting Government initiatives to reduce sexual assault on minors.

Furthermore, since recently, the Police is forming part of Community Child Protection Programme, implemented by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, with a view to -

- (i) setting up Community Childwatch Committees around the island to act as a surveillance mechanism and to have a community-led approach;
- (ii) monitoring the risk and progress of the Community Childwatch Committees, and
- (iii) devising plans of action for the prevention of child abuse.

In addition, the following measures are being implemented by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in this connection:-

- Setting up of an Emergency Response Team in June 2010 comprising officers and psychologists at the level of Family Support Bureaux, representatives of the National Children's Council and Non Governmental Organisations with a view to providing prompt intervention in serious child violence cases;
- Renting of an additional shelter to place victims of child abuse;

- Laying greater emphasis on parental education through the *Ecole des Parents* project;
- Capacity building programme for all officers of the Child Development Unit on techniques of enquiry and investigation and training on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children to officers of that Ministry, the Police Department and other stakeholders as from 22 November 2010;
- Implementation of the School Child Protection Club, which was launched in September 2010 and which aims at initiating home grown protection clubs for children by children at the level of the school itself; and
- Ongoing crackdown operations in collaboration with the *Brigade Pour La Protection des Mineurs*.

Furthermore, the staffing of the Ministry of Gender Equality in the grade of Family Welfare and Protection Officers and Psychologists will be reinforced. A separate mechanism to specifically deal with children will be put in place with the appropriate and adequate infrastructure and professional services to attend to the immediate and multi-disciplinary needs of children victims of violence.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, on its part, is also sparing no effort to protect children from social dangers. Students are sensitized on issues such as truancy, the dangers of befriending strangers, and of venturing in unknown places thereby exposing themselves to the risk of being sexually assaulted.

The sexual abuse of minors is a substantial societal problem worldwide and which has consequences into adulthood. It is our common duty to protect minors from such abuse.

The Government is acting on several fronts to tackle this problem. Such action should be complemented by other actors and stakeholders such as NGOs and other Community Based Organizations, who are expected to give full support to Government initiatives.

PRISONS - SECURITY

(No. 1B/542) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

whether, in regard to the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the actions that have been taken to reinforce security thereat, since the last mutiny.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that following the disturbances which occurred at the Grand River North West Remand Prison on 27 June 2010 which led to the escape of 34 detainees, security measures in the prisons have been stepped up.

The following measures have been taken -

- a contingency of Special Mobile Force personnel is permanently based at the Grand River North West Remand Prison and the Beau Bassin Central Prison to man the watch towers and to provide support to the Prison officers;
- a unit of the Special Supporting Unit is permanently stationed at the Petit Verger Prison;
- special searches, with deep search metal detectors, are regularly carried out with the assistance of SMF officers at the Beau Bassin Central Prison;
- a special search team has been set up at the level of each prison to carry out systematic searches of prohibited items such as mobile phones, illicit drugs and weapons in the prisons on a daily basis. The intelligence system has been reinforced to detect prohibited articles;
- a new CCTV system has been commissioned at the Grand River North West Remand Prison on 29 October 2010. The system will be fully operational as from this month. The CCTV system at the Beau Bassin Central Prison and the New Wing Prison has been upgraded with effect from September last and the system at Phoenix Prison is fully operational. A maintenance contract has been entered into with the suppliers. Training has been provided to Prison Officers on the effective use of the CCTV system. In regard to the installation of the CCTV system at the Women Prison and the Petit Verger Prison, tenders are being floated for the appointment of a Consultant for the project;

- the jamming system at Beau Bassin Central Prison is being upgraded. Tenders are being invited from potential suppliers. In the light of positive feedback, the system will be extended to other prisons;
- communications have been enhanced by acquisition of 30 two-way radios and 16 cordless telephones. Training in radio communications has been provided to Prison officers;
- a new digital UHF radio communication system will be put in place as from December this year. The radio network system would be jointly used by the Police and the Prisons Departments. For better monitoring, radio communication in all prisons will be connected to the Control Room at the Beau Bassin Central Prison;
- additional security equipment are being acquired, namely hand-held metal detector, deep search metal detector, day and night binocular, under vehicle search mirror and boss chair for all prisons;
- new infrastructural works are being undertaken to reinforce security in the prisons, namely the construction of a new gate lodge at the Phoenix Prison and the Women Prison, the construction of a Special Prison for Women at Barkly and burglar proofing at the Grand River North West Remand Prison;
- escort of detainees from the prisons to public hospitals is undertaken by Prison Security Squad Officers. Detainees attending court are escorted by the Police, and
- a review of the standing orders is being undertaken to ensure that a standardised set of procedures are followed in all prisons.

Following the disturbances at the Grand River North West Remand Prison, I had requested the Office of Public Sector Governance to carry out a thorough organizational audit of the Mauritius Prisons Service. The report was received in August 2010. Moreover, a team led by the former National Security Adviser carried out a security audit of the prisons and the report was received in July 2010.

I am informed that the recommendations contained in both reports are being implemented by the Prisons department. A committee has been set up at the level of my Office to oversee the implementation of both reports.

I should add that during my recent visit to Singapore, I met the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Home Affairs and the Director of Prisons of Singapore and requested them to provide assistance to carry out a review of the security system in our existing prisons, with a view to ensuring an efficient management of the prisons and effective rehabilitation of detainees. We have already requested the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise to approach the relevant authorities in Singapore to extend necessary assistance for a comprehensive review of the security requirements in our prisons. In this regard, Mr Alvin Lim, Director of the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise was in Mauritius on 25 October 2010 to discuss further on the project.

We have also solicited the assistance of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a Corrections' Strategic Framework for the Mauritius Prisons Service on the same lines as that of the National Policing Strategic Framework. This plan would include measures for the effective and efficient management of the prisons as well as the rehabilitation and treatment programmes and the reinsertion programmes for prisoners returning to the community.

My Government will continue with the ongoing reforms of the Prisons Service which include the improvement of the physical conditions and security in the prisons with a view to providing a safe and healthy environment for the rehabilitation of detainees to meet the requirements of a modern country. We want to maintain discipline in the prisons while respecting human rights of all concerned.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

(No. 1B/543) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the proposal for constitutional reforms and/or for a "Second Republic", he will state if consideration will be given to -

- (a) bringing changes in the electoral system;
- (b) strengthening the provisions for the freedom of expression and association to include, *inter alia*, freedom of the press;
- (c) the setting up of a Senate, and

(d) making provisions for -

- (i) the safeguarding of democracy in local government
- (ii) the abolition of the mandatory declaration of communal belonging by candidates, and
- (iii) a charter of social, economic and ecological rights, and if so, when, indicating the procedure therefor.

(Withdrawn)

HUMAN TISSUE CULTURE

(No. 1B/566) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the putting in place of the legal and logistic requirements in relation to human tissue culture, she will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

STATE LANDS - RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

(No. 1B/567) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in line with Government decision not to tolerate squatting and to apply the provisions of the law for the eviction of squatters and the demolition of all unauthorized structures on the sites occupied by them, he will state where matters stand in regard to the unauthorized religious structures erected on the State lands.

Reply: It cannot be overemphasised that squatting is a criminal offence and should not be tolerated. Nor can be tolerated any encouragement, enticement and inducement to squat from any persons or quarters.

Notwithstanding this, we cannot, as a caring Government and on purely humanitarian grounds, be and remain insensitive and indifferent to the plight of the most and genuinely needy members of our society. It is also Government policy to provide land to the most vulnerable families subject to certain specific eligibility criteria and following an in-depth socio-economic enquiry into their status and situation. In this context, it is pertinent to mention that recently some

106 families, who have been illegally occupying State lands at Dubreuil and La Ferme Reservoir, have been allocated building site leases.

In particular regard to religious structures erected on State lands, the House surely appreciates and understands that the issue is highly sensitive in nature and it, thus, needs to be tackled with utmost circumspection with a view to finding acceptable and enduring solutions. Finding such solutions may take longer, but we are determined to find them.

NET FISHING

(No. 1B/568) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to large net fishing, he will state if any case of illegal fishing using same has been reported and if so, will he state where matters stand in relation to the use thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that there has been no case of illegal large net fishing reported to my Ministry and no person has been contravened for same during the past year.

Section (14) (1) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act provides that no person shall fish with or have in his possession at sea, a large net from, 01 October in a year to the last day of February of the following year.

However, Section 14 (5) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act makes provision to allow, in any year, by regulations, fishing at sea for an extra period of not more than 10 days where weather conditions prevented for 05 days consecutively the operation of a large net, during the period 01 March to 30 September in that year.

Since there were seven periods of 5 consecutive days of bad weather during the large net fishing season ending 30 September 2010, regulations were made to allow the net fishermen to fish for 10 extra days from 01 October to 10 October 2010 in accordance with provision of the Act.

FISHERMEN – SAFETY EQUIPMENT

(No. 1B/569) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the fishermen, he will state when safety equipment at sea was last delivered to them.

Reply: Safety equipment comprising life jackets, life rings, radar reflectors, tarpaulins and hand-flares were last donated to fishermen in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The donation was part of an operation to promote the use of safety equipment at sea by our fishermen. An intense campaign of sensitisation on their use and benefits for fishermen was concurrently held.

These safety equipment can be used over a long period of time. We have had requests from some fishers that the equipment be issued again.

My Ministry is presently undertaking a survey to assess the state of the donated safety equipment and subsequently the necessity of issuing same will be considered under the Fisheries Master Plan which will soon be formulated.

SALE BY LEVY SOLIDARITY FUND – BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/571) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the number of families who have benefited therefrom since June 2010 to-date, indicating in each case, the quantum thereof.

Reply: As the House will recall, provision was made in the Budget Speech of 2007/2008 for the setting up of a Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund to financially assist deserving families who have lost their only residence through sale by levy to acquire a house by making a grant on a case to case basis. A total of 140 applications were received in the first instance, out of which 39 families were found to be eligible by the High Level Committee. In February 2009, following the decision to launch a second exercise to accommodate hardship cases that were not reported in time, 281 additional cases were received and examined by the High Level Committee and 10 families were found to be eligible for financial assistance. The House may wish to refer to previous replies to PQs on this matter.

I am informed that since June 2010, an amount of Rs518,500 has been disbursed to 4 families who are eligible under the Budget measure of 2007/2008. This amount comprises namely the payment of Rs500,000 for the acquisition of a house for one family and payment of a monthly rent allowance of Rs 1,250 to 3 beneficiaries. This rent allowance has been aligned with the "Assistance to Elderly Persons to pay rent " Scheme run by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Reforms Institutions. This decision was taken by the High Level Committee on account of the old age of the beneficiaries, who are above 70 years of age.

In addition to the above, I am also informed that rent allowance has been recommended in the case of one beneficiary on account of his physical invalidity. The rent allowance will be paid on a quarterly basis upon submission of his life certificate.

MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE – OFFICERS – ARREST

(No. 1B/572) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise, following the arrest of two officers and the resignation of the Chairperson thereof, he will state -

- (a) if an audit of the stock has been carried out, indicating the outcome thereof;
- (b) if the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Police have inquired thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof;
- (c) the value of the goods seized, indicating the penalty due to the MRA, and
- (d) if the policy of end of year gifts and sponsorships is being reviewed.

Reply: Following the arrests of two MDFP officers on Wednesday 18 August 2010, the Board of Directors of the Company, at a meeting held on 24 August 2010, resolved to appoint independent accounting firm KPMG to carry out a full inventory count and a forensic audit of the inventory processes and controls.

KPMG submitted its final audit report on 16 September 2010. The key findings were -

- There were two stocks - one for duty free goods and one for duty paid goods.
- The value of duty free goods amounted to Rs350 m. as at end August 2010 whereas duty paid goods, a peripheral activity, were valued at Rs1.3 m. from which the gifts have been alleged to have been taken out.

The auditor noted that for duty free stock, the systems of internal controls were, by and large, reasonably adequate.

For duty paid goods, the auditor noted that the purchase and disposal of duty paid goods by the Company had not been subject to satisfactory level of internal controls. Actions have already been taken to secure all the duty paid goods at one location and are currently under lock, pending the finalisation of the ongoing police investigations. MDFP Board has additionally resolved at its meeting held on 17 September 2010 to freeze all duty paid items orders until an appropriate management process is approved and put into place.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that MRA, ICAC and Police are still investigating into the matter.

Concerning part (c) of the question, as the investigation is ongoing, no information is yet available.

With regard to part (d) of the question the Board of MDFP has been apprised and policy of end of year gifts and sponsorships are being reviewed.

MONEY LAUNDERING – ALLEDGED CASES

(No. 1B/573) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the public allegations made in India of alleged cases of money laundering in the organisation of the Indian Premier League Cricket Tournament and of the last Commonwealth Games involving Indian companies registered in the offshore sector of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to if it has initiated any action in relation thereto and if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: With regard to the alleged cases of fraud in connection with the Cricket Tournament and the Commonwealth games involving Indian companies and reported by the media, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that no information has been communicated to the FSC by any official agency and also no request for information has been made to the FSC by any authority from India.

The FSC normally provides information to foreign regulators in relation to such cases, upon requests made pursuant to MOU's on exchange of information with these regulators. The FSC has not initiated any enquiry in this case since there is no formal request. The FSC is

prepared to provide full collaboration to its counterparts investigating any alleged fraudulent acts in accordance with the law and international obligations.

SPECIAL FUNDS – SETTING UP

(No. 1B/574) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to each of the Special Funds set up following the global economic crisis, he will state the -

- (a) nature and purpose thereof;
- (b) source thereof;
- (c) amount deposited therein and disbursed therefrom, as at to date;
- (d) balance as at 31 October 2010;
- (e) amount of interest earned on unutilised balance as at 31 October 2010, and
- (f) amount transferred to the Budget in -
 - (i) 2008-09;
 - (ii) period July-December 2009, and
 - (iii) the current fiscal year, indicating how they have been impacted on the budget deficit.

Reply: I presume the question refers to the six Special Funds whose creation were announced in the 2008/09 Budget Speech and which were set up during 2008 by way of Regulations under the Finance and Audit Act, namely -

- (i) Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Fund;
- (ii) Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development (HRKAD) Fund;
- (iii) Food Security Fund (FSF);
- (iv) Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF);
- (v) Social Housing Development Fund (SHDF), and
- (vi) Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund (MASMED), later renamed as Savings Job and Recovery (SJR) Fund.

The information will be placed in the Library.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT - YEARS 2005-2010

(No. 1B/575) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the years 2005 and 2010, he will state –

- (a) the share of wages to Gross Domestic Product;
- (b) the share of private consumption to Gross Domestic Product;
- (c) the cumulative inflation rate and statutory wage compensation rate over the intervening period;
- (d) if there has been increasing income inequality as a result of loss of purchasing power, and
- (e) if Government will consider any form of income support or minimum wage legislation to remedy the situation.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

COPYRIGHT BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. 1B/576) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the introduction of a new Copyright Bill, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: With the development of modern technology, copyright issues are multi-faceted and are related to sectors such as information and communication technology and Intellectual Property Rights. Thus Government has sought the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and TradeCom for the reviewing of the Copyright Act.

Following consultations with all stakeholders, in November 2009, a draft Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Bill was prepared under the TradeCom Programme, which provides technical assistance to ACP countries. The draft bill was transmitted to the World Intellectual Property Organisation for review.

WIPO has examined the contents of the draft Bill and informed in May 2010 that the draft was overly elaborate and would therefore be complicated to implement and enforce.

We are awaiting for WIPO to submit the new draft bill for consideration by stakeholders at national level.

A working session has been scheduled with WIPO in January 2011 to finalise the new Copyright Bill.

ARTISTS (LOCAL) – FACILITIES

(No. 1B/577) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in the context of the presentation of the next budget, he will state if he has had meetings with the local artists with a view to assessing their needs and if so, when, indicating the outcome thereof and if not, why not.

Reply: I have had regular meetings with local artists not only to assess their needs but also to discuss on facilities that could be provided to them by my Ministry.

Government has, in fact, been proactive to address their concerns and some measures have already been taken.

I would wish to mention a few of these measures -

- (i) A scheme to subsidize 50% of the rental of venues for cultural shows by local artists has been set up and will be operational as from 01 December 2010;
- (ii) with the collaboration of my colleague, the Minister of Youth and Sports, some sports grounds, such as the training grounds of Germain Commarmond Stadium and the parking space at Anjalay Stadium, are being made available to artists for the holding of concerts;
- (iii) a Provident and Benevolent Fund has been set up by the Mauritius Society of Authors in August 2010 to provide a monthly pension to artists above 60 years;
- (iv) a Tourism and Culture Channel which, amongst others, promotes our local artists, is operational since last month; and
- (v) An Artist Desk manned by two Cultural Advisers is already operational with a view to maintaining permanent liaison with our local artists.

Artists have expressed their satisfaction to these measures.

Proposals from our local artists have been submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for consideration in the next budget. The hon. Member will understand that I cannot reveal the outcome thereof, before the presentation of the next budget.

CITE RICHELIEU - CHILD J. M. – DEATH

(No. 1B/578) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the death of child J. M., of Cité Richelieu in September 2010, after having been sexually assaulted, she will state if she has taken cognizance of the inquiry carried out by the Ombudsperson for Children and if so, will she state the measures that have been taken in the light of the report.

Reply: Following the death of minor J. M., aged 7 years, which was reported to my Ministry on 13 September 2009, a departmental enquiry was conducted at the level of my Ministry to look into the shortcomings and weaknesses in the service delivery with respect to child protection. Consequently, a restructuring programme with a new child protection service system has been elaborated and same was approved by Government on 24 September 2010.

In the meantime, the Ombudsperson for Children made a statement to the effect that she would be conducting an enquiry on the case to establish the responsibility of all parties involved.

I gave my full support and collaboration to the Ombudsperson for Children to conduct the enquiry which started on Thursday 16 September 2010.

On Friday 24 September 2010, on the same day on which Government approved the restructuring programme of my Ministry, the Ombudsperson for Children informed me about the main contents of the interim report of her enquiry. She highlighted the fact that the mechanism which is in place with respect to child protection issues should be completely reviewed and reinforced. She reported that the existing system of Family Support Bureaux which was set up since 2003 to provide integrated services should be completely phased out. She deplored the fact that officers failed to conduct an in-depth enquiry within the neighbourhood and consider the best interests of the child. Instead, they relied solely on the relationship which the child shared with her mother.

The Ombudsperson for Children further highlighted that the field officers lacked in professional training and commitment when dealing with cases. She stressed on the fact that the Child Development Unit was operating with very limited capacity and the field officers are very often called upon to deal with many cases at a time such that they are burnt out and are therefore not able to ensure proper follow up on all cases referred to them.

As for the restructuring programme of my Ministry, I held a press conference on the very same day, where I announced that after probing further into the tragic case of Joannic, it was found that there were many shortcomings in the functioning of the Child Development Unit. Investigations revealed that allegations that the minor might have been exposed to risky situations might aver to be true. I enumerated a series of measures which my Ministry proposes to take in view of strengthening and re-structuring the existing framework and mechanism dealing with child violence cases.

These measures include, amongst others –

1. Reviewing the existing mechanism with regard to the Family Support Bureaux whereby Child Protection Services would operate with a separate management and technical team. This system would ensure that timely and appropriate support services are provided to children victims of violence.

In the same line, provision has been made for transport facilities to be made available in each of the six outstations for rapid intervention. Moreover, three Senior Family Welfare and Protection Officers will ensure supervision and will also monitor the intervention of field officers on a case to case basis to ensure proper follow up. In addition, guidelines for intervention in child protection cases have been prepared and will be provided to each officer working on the field.

2. My Ministry is currently working on a training programme for all officers involved in the provision of Child Protection Services on techniques for conducting an enquiry and investigation, stress management, dealing with difficult clients and first aid, amongst others.

3. The Community Child Protection Programme which was launched as a forum to ensure community awareness with respect to child protection and welfare has been revisited.

The Community Child Watch Committees which were set up in the immediate locality of high risk areas to ensure early detection and reporting of children at risk cases have also been revisited. One was launched on 08 October 2010 at Cité Richelieu and the other areas are Pte aux Sables, Baie du Tombeau, Cité Mangalkan, Cité Ste Catherine and Camp Levieux. Up to December 2010, my Ministry is proposing to set up 20 such committees in all in various other high risk regions island-wide.

4. My Ministry has introduced the concept of working together in an endeavour to foster group intervention and collective responsibility to fight violence against children. In this context, my Ministry has proposed

–

- (i) to set up a High Powered Committee with different stakeholders under the Chairpersonship of my Permanent Secretary to coordinate actions with respect to providing support to children at risk and their families;
- (ii) to enlist the support of people in the Community to intervene in Community Childwatch Committees and other projects. A communiqué to that effect has been published and more than 1000 individuals have positively responded to the call. Based on this encouraging response, a Bank of Volunteers will be set up and followed up by appropriate training, and
- (iii) to seek the partnership and collaboration of NGOs to support the projects of my Ministry. In this context, meetings have already been held with institutions such as the Institut Cardinal Jean Margéot for collaboration.

5. Taking into consideration the increase in number of children in need of residential care, a second shelter will be operational at Cap Malheureux.

The building is being renovated and would be ready early next year. Collaboration with NGOs will be sought for its operation.

These are in line with several of the recommendations made by the Ombudsperson for Children in her report. As regards the remaining recommendations, my Ministry will be examining the implications thereof and will take measures, wherever warranted and as appropriate.

MBC - MRS R. A. - INTERDICTION

(No. 1B/579) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to Mrs R. A., trade unionist at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, who has been interdicted, he will state if Professor Torul has submitted his report, and if so –

- (a) when;
- (b) the outcome thereof, and
- (c) where matters stand.

Reply: I have to inform the House that the case of Mrs R. Ameer, trade unionist at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, who has on 17 September 2010, reported to the President of the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, the existence of a labour dispute between herself and the MBC, is still proceeding before the Commission. The case will be heard before the Commission on 30 November 2010. Consequently, Professor Torul has not yet submitted any report to me on the matter.

EXPATRIATES – WORKING CONDITIONS

(No. 1B/580) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, he will state if consideration will be given for the ratification thereof for the promotion of humane and lawful working and living conditions for foreigners working in Mauritius and if not, why not.

Reply: I presume that the Hon member is referring to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant workers and Members of their Families.

If this is the case, I wish to draw the attention of the House that my Ministry caters only for the protection of the working conditions of the expatriate working in Mauritius and not their family members. In fact, family members of migrant workers are presently not covered in our legislation and apart from those employed in technical, supervisory and managerial grades, migrant workers are generally not allowed to be accompanied by their family members.

Consequently, I am not proposing, at this stage, to consider the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

CAMP LEVIEUX - NHDC HOUSING ESTATE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/581) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that there is an irregular supply of water at the NHDC Housing Estate at Camp Levieux and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures that will be taken to provide regular water supply thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority (CWA) that the NHDC complex at Camp Levieux is supplied from Stanley Reservoir.

Initially, the water was being supplied to a ground water tank and pumped to the roof tanks, which had to be maintained by the Syndic. As the Syndic is not functioning, the water pumps and float valves of roof tanks have disappeared and the plumbing systems have considerably deteriorated.

As a result, the CWA is carrying out Valve Operations to divert water to the Complex and the water pressure is adequate to fill the roof tanks. However, due to the defective network and roof tanks in the Complex, the residents living at higher levels face water supply problems.

I am informed that the Central Water Authority and the NHDC has conducted several site meetings and NHDC has been requested to undertake the rehabilitation of the internal plumbing systems and roof tanks to ensure an adequate supply to the inhabitants.

STANLEY/ROSE HILL - SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. 1B/582) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the

sewerage project in Constituency No. 19, Stanley/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to the –

- (a) names of the roads where works have been completed, indicating when the said roads will be resurfaced, and
- (b) measures taken, if any, to alleviate the air pollution problem resulting therefrom.

Reply: I am tabling the information with respect to part (a) of the question. I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that, as per the provisions of the Works Contract, the resurfacing of roads is carried out in two stages. When pipe laying works are completed, the trenches are filled with crusher-run followed by the temporary reinstatement of the trench using DBST. Thereafter, the final resurfacing work is carried out using asphaltic concrete, normally, within three months as from the temporary reinstatement work to allow the settlement of the trenches. I am further informed that for the classified roads, the final reinstatement work is carried out over the full width of the road, whereas, for secondary roads it is trench width reinstatement. Moreover, works along the roads are carried out in stretches and one road may comprise several stretches.

On the whole, sewerage works in the region of Stanley/Rose Hill have been completed along a total of 165 stretches out of which 82 have been resurfaced temporarily and 46 permanently. I am assured by the WMA that the resurfacing of all roads in the region of Stanley/Rose Hill will be completed by June 2011

As regard part (b) of the question, the Works Contract provides for the regular sprinkling of water and cleaning of site by the Contractor. In that regard,

- (i) all the roads which have not yet been reinstated are being sprinkled with water at least twice daily, and
- (ii) in addition, the roads are brushed both manually and mechanically using a skid steer loader equipped with mechanical sweeper.

NHDC HOUSING ESTATES - REHABILITATION

(No. 1B/583) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the projects for the rehabilitation of the

NHDC Housing Estates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to-

- (a) the names of the estates being rehabilitated;
- (b) the names of the contractor(s);
- (c) if the projects have been successfully completed;
- (d) if the objectives thereof have been met;
- (e) who supervised and certified the completed works, and
- (f) the total amount of money disbursed as at to-date, in respect of each project, giving details thereof

Reply: With regard to parts (a), (b) and (f) of the question, the information is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As regard parts (c) and (d) of the question, I wish to inform the House that most of the works are nearing completion. On some sites, slight delays have occurred due to inclement weather, variations of works due to further defects which came to light during the course of works and reluctance of inhabitants to provide access within their premises.

Regarding part (e) of the question, I am informed that all the works have been duly supervised and certified by the technicians of the NHDC.

NHDC HOUSING ESTATES – MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

(No. 1B/584) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Ministerial Committee set up to look into the problems faced by the residents/syndics of the NHDC Housing Estates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of meetings held, indicating the date and place of each meeting;
- (b) number of persons who deponed before the committee, indicating their names and status, and
- (c) if it has produced any report as at to date.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Ministerial Committee under the chair of the then Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communication met in his office on 4 occasions namely on 25 June, 23 July, 03 September and 22 September 2009 respectively.

The Committee was set up to look into the various problems pertaining to NHDC houses including syndic matters. Other issues pertaining to the infrastructural problems inherent to the NHDC Housing Estates were also discussed. They are -

- the physical degradation of the estates;
- illegal construction;
- waste disposal system.

With regard to part (b) of the question, officers of my Ministry, the NHDC and other Ministries and organisations were present at the meetings.

As regards part (c) of the question, no formal report has been produced. However the following decisions were taken by the committee -

- the NHDC would carry out a survey in all NHDC housing estates to identify problems areas;
- to look into ways and means to make the syndic operational.

The House will recall that in the Budgetary exercise in June 2009, a provision of Rs 280 M was made for rehabilitation works to be carried out in some NHDC housing estates. Works identified as priority were -

- (i) waterproofing ;
- (ii) repairs to cracks and other ancillary works;
- (iii) repairs to electric meter cabins.

As at to date 90% of the above mentioned rehabilitation works have been completed.

As far as syndic matters are concerned, there are 44 housing estates which have a "*reglement de co-propriete*". Unfortunately, out of them only 9 syndics are operational.

I have, in the presence of officers of the NHDC, personally met representatives of syndics which are operational to impress upon them to continue their good work. On the other hand the representatives complained about non contribution of the residents to the common funds of the syndics. They have accordingly requested Government to consider providing funds for the running of the syndic. The advice of professionals in this sector has been sought and they have indicated that all residents should assume their responsibility and contribute to their respective syndic fund.

I wish to remind the House that it rests with the purchasers/owners of the housing units to set up their own Syndic, to look into the management and maintenance of their housing estates

and common areas. However, the NHDC is looking into the advisability of enlisting the services of professionals with a view to assisting the inhabitants in setting up syndics.

CWA – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/585) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons for the irregular supply thereof in many parts of the island, since May 2010, and
- (b) state if Government proposes to privatise the Authority.

(Withdrawn)

ROADS – CONSTRUCTION – COMPULSORY ACQUISITION

(No. 1B/586) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to lands being compulsorily acquired for the construction of roads, he will give a list thereof –

- (a) where the negotiations with the owners are still ongoing, and
- (b) where objections to the compulsory acquisition have been filed and are pending

Reply: The requested information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

RELIGIOUS BODIES – IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY - DUTY

(No. 1B/587) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to religious bodies having as object the advancement of religion, and existing autonomously without being affiliated to a federation, he will state if they are exempted from the payment of duty upon the acquisition of immoveable property, under the Registration Duty Act and if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that religious bodies are exempted from the payment of duty and taxes upon acquisition of property under the Registration Duty Act and Land (Duties and Taxes) Act.

‘Religious body’ is defined under section 2 of the Registration Duty Act as a non-profit registered association which has as object the advancement of religion and includes a religious federation or similar organisation receiving subsidies from Government.

I understand that the application of that statutory exemption and the matter relating to the affiliation to a religious federation are currently the subject of review by my Ministry, Registrar-General Department and the State Law Office.

PRIME MINISTER’S RELIEF FUND – CONTRIBUTION & BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1A/101) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the –

- (a) balance as at to date;
- (b) amount of funds contributed by State owned companies, para-statal bodies and other corporate bodies, indicating the contribution of each of them, and
- (c) names of the beneficiaries, indicating the quantum thereof, in each case.

As regards part (a), the Prime Minister’s Relief and Support Fund has an available amount of Rs40,321,165.25 as at 04 November 2010.

As regards part (b), State-owned companies, para-statal bodies and other corporate bodies do not contribute to the Fund. However, there are private companies, social and religious organisations which have been voluntarily to the Fund.

Regarding part (c), I can assure the hon. Member that there are clear criteria in the administrative rules and procedures of the Fund which can be consulted on the website of my office. Also the accounts of the Fund are audited by the Director of Audit.

POLICE STATIONS - DIRECTIONAL SIGN POSTS

(No. 1A/102) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he is aware that some road users and tourists encounter difficulties to locate Police Stations around the island and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the putting up of conspicuous directional sign posts in the regions where these stations are located.

Reply: (Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping): Arrangements are being made by the Road Development Authority in collaboration with the Commissioner of Police and Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to place directional signs for Police stations.

BATTERIE DE L'HARMONIE SITE - RESTORATION

(No. 1A/103) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the Batterie L'Harmonie site, at Black River, and of the urgent need for the restoration thereof and if so, will he state the actions that will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I am aware of the deplorable state of the Batterie de L'Harmonie site at Black River and I agree that there is an urgent need for restoration in view of its historical nature.

Following advice received from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, a tender was launched for carrying out a structural survey to evaluate and ascertain the structural soundness of the building before start of any restoration works. Only one bid was received.

Consequently, the possibility of carrying out the works either through the PPP or BOT system was explored but could not be concluded.

My Ministry is exploring other avenues for the restoration of the site.

MILITARY ROAD, PORT LOUIS - TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. 1A/104) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Military Road, Port Louis, in the vicinity of the Champ de Mars, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and

Road Safety Unit, information as to if a survey has been carried out to gauge the impact of traffic congestion, in the early morning during horse training sessions and if so, the remedial measures that have been or will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) has informed that it has received no complaint regarding any traffic congestion problem at Military Road, Port Louis, in the vicinity of the Champ de Mars in the early morning during horse training sessions. The Mauritius Turf Club has informed that horse training takes place between 0500 hrs and 0730 hrs and the majority of the public gathers in the vicinity of the Grand Stand along Eugene Laurent Street. The number of people rarely exceeds 50.

As a traffic management measure, yellow lines have already been provided along sections of Eugene Laurent Street to control the parking of vehicles and thus, avoid obstruction of the road and its different accesses.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - ANNUAL GRANTS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1A/105) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the annual grants given by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council -

- (a) a list of the sociocultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefitted therefrom, since October 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case, the -
 - (i) names thereof;
 - (ii) the quantum thereof ;
 - (iii) purpose therefor, and
- (b) information as to -
 - (i) the criteria laid down for eligibility therefor and to determine the quantum thereof, and
 - (ii) how the beneficiaries were targeted.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the library as soon as the exercise will be completed.

TRANQUEBAR - FOOTBALL GROUND -

(No. 1A/106) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a football ground at Cremation Road, Tranquebar, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if the contract for the construction thereof has been awarded and if so, indicate the date the works are expected to –

- (a) start, and
- (b) be completed.

Reply: The land for the construction of the football ground at Cremation Road, Tranquebar is vested with the Ministry of Youth & Sports.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU. Land Transport and Shipping (Public Infrastructure Division) has already been requested to carry out a survey of the site with a view to preparing the bid documents.

This project will be implemented in financial year 2011.

REAL ESTATES & CONSULTANCY SERVICES - DIRECTOR

(No. 1A/107) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the post of Director of Real Estates and Consultancy Services, he will state if it has been restyled from that of Chief Government Valuer and if so the –

- (a) reasons therefor;
- (b) implications, if any, on the salary scale;
- (c) terms and conditions on which non-Government consultancy works are carried out;
- (d) fees obtained on a yearly basis since its creation, and
- (e) number of assignments carried out, indicating -
 - (i) the nature thereof,
 - (ii) if other valuation officers are engaged thereinto and if there is any risk of conflict of interest.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the library as soon as the exercise will be completed.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF VACOAS/PHOENIX - SOCIO-CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS & SPORTING CLUBS/ASSOCIATIONS - GRANTS & ALLOCATIONS -

(No. 1A/108) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)

asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the grants and allocations, in cash or in kind, given by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to a list of the socio-cultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefitted therefrom since October 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) names thereof;
- (b) quantum or nature thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Reply: The information is being placed in the Library.

BRANDING OF MAURITIUS PROJECT – SLOGANS - CONTRACT

(No. 1A/109) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)

asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Branding of Mauritius project, he will give the list and contents of the preselected slogans, indicating –

- (a) the names of the bidders, and
- (b) composition of the evaluation committee.

Reply: The contract for the Branding of Mauritius Project which was awarded to Acanchi Ltd, provides, *inter-alia*, for the elaboration of a Brand Identity which comprises the production of the slogan, as one of the deliverables of the assignment.

Following comprehensive research carried out locally and internationally, the brand values and brand personality of Mauritius were articulated.

On the basis of these values, the Consultant came up with a set of twenty-three slogans which could potentially encapsulate and reflect the essence of the Mauritius Brand, as follows -

- Blessed by nature;

- Mo content twa;
- It's a pleasure;
- Cordially, naturally;
- A warm welcome;
- You are most welcomed;
- Delighted;
- Feel the welcome;
- Mo koko, mon trésor, my treasure;
- You are welcomed;
- Discover wellbeing;
- Cordially;
- Bienvenue. Bien fait ;
- Je suis enchanté ;
- Enchanté ;
- Wellness Island ;
- Ile Généreuse, Ile Durable ;
- Bountiful welcome;
- Cordialement;
- Bienvenue. Bien fait. Bien-être;
- Sugar. Spice. and all things nice;
- Generosity of spirit, and

- Welcome.

Research was carried out on the slogans, on the basis of set criteria.

Following further research carried out by Acanchi Ltd, the Consultant presented, on 11 June 2009, her findings to the Steering Committee set up to monitor and oversee the implementation of the project and recommended the concept of “Maurice, C’est un plaisir” since it is considered to fully embody the essence of the brand strategy and the core values underlying Mauritius.

Concerning part (a) of the question, I have been advised that since Acanchi Ltd had the responsibility to produce the slogan, in accordance with their obligations under the contract, the Ministry has not been aware as to whether they had recourse to bidding exercise for the production of the slogan or not.

As regards part(b) of the question, I am informed that the Steering Committee, set up to monitor the implementation of the project and comprising representatives of the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, Board of Investment, Air Mauritius Ltd, as well as the private sector, evaluated and agreed to the recommendation for the use of the slogan- “*Maurice, C’est un plaisir*”, in the light of the arguments put forward by the Consultant, in support of the rationale for the use of the slogan.

TRUST FUND FOR EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS – BENEFICIARIES

(No.1A/110) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Trust Fund for Excellence In Sports, he will give the list of the -

- (a) athletes who benefit therefrom, indicating their respective discipline and,
- (b) coaches who work therewith.

Reply: The information has been placed in the Library of National Assembly.

LA TOUR KOENIG – NHDC – COMMERCIAL SLOTS

(No. 1A/111) **Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the building which used to house the co-operative consumer shop at La Tour Koenig, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain

from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if the sale thereof is being envisaged and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: According to information obtained from the NHDC Ltd, the company has in 1995 constructed a commercial complex comprising 73 units at la Tour Koenig. To date, it has sold 66 of the commercial lots.

The sale of the commercial lots is marketed through the website of the NHDC and upon request from interested buyers.

The NHDC has confirmed that no commercial slot has been sold to any co-operative consumer shop.

To date no request for the purchase of commercial slots has been received from any cooperative consumer shop.

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL – HOSPITAL CARE ATTENDANTS - OVERTIME ALLOWANCES

(No. 1A/112) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she is aware that the female Hospital Care Assistants of the Dr AG Jeetoo Hospital have not been paid their overtime allowances for the periods-

- (a) 3 November 2008 to 28 January 2009;
- (b) 9 November 2009 to 27 December 2009
- (c) 28 December 2009 to 24 January 2010, and
- (d) 25 January 2010 to 05 September 2010 and if so, will she state the reasons therefor, indicating if remedial actions will be taken.

Reply: There is not any grade of female Hospital Care Assistant on the establishment of my Ministry. However, I believe the hon. Member is referring to officers holding the post of Hospital Care Attendant.

I am informed that female Hospital Care Attendants at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital have, in fact, not been paid their overtime allowances for the periods mentioned at parts (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the question because the Attendance Registers were kept in the custody of the Internal Control Unit of my Ministry for enquiry purposes following allegations of malpractices relating to overtime work since February 2009. The Attendance Registers have been remitted to the Administration of Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital in August 2010. Overtime allowance for the period

12 July 2010 to 08 August 2010 has been paid with October 2010 salary. Arrangements have been made to effect payment of the outstanding overtime allowances by the end of November 2010.

REMUNERATION ORDERS - MINIMUM SALARY

(No. 1A/113) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Remuneration Orders, he will state the sectors of employment which are not presently covered, indicating the number of employees who are not being guaranteed a minimum salary, as a consequence thereof

- (a) in absolute terms and,
- (b) as a percentage of the working population.

Reply: About 20% of employees representing 75,000 of the private sector are not governed by a Remuneration Order regulations. Though no minimum salary is prescribed for these workers, their salaries are subject to agreement between them and their respective employer. These employees are employed mostly in the information and communication technology and financial sectors. The financial sector includes banking, insurance and offshore.

As regards the other terms and conditions of employment of these employees, they are governed by the provision of the Employment Relations Act 2008, as amended.

RUISSEAU TERRE ROUGE PROJECT

(No. 1A/114) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Ruisseau Terre Rouge project, he will state

- (a) when the contract was allocated
- (b) the initial contract value
- (c) if there have been delays in the execution of the works
- (d) the total amount of money paid to the contractor, indicating the excess of money paid, if any, and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: The information sought is as follows -

- (a) A contract was awarded to Laxmanbhai Co Ltd on 7 June 2005 for upgrading works at Ruisseau Terre Rouge.
- (b) The initial contract of a value of Rs22,899,826 (VAT inclusive) consisted of 200m of river alignment works from the bridge near Briquetterie Govt. School upstream. The contract was terminated on 19 March 2007 as the contractor could not perform correctly and abandoned the site.
- (c) There was considerable delays during execution of the works due to -
 - (i) difficulties experienced by the Contractor to carry out the works due to water flowing along the alignment of the reinforced concrete channel to be constructed and following complaints received from residents due to inconveniences, and
 - (ii) way leave issues and extreme difficult conditions on site.

Initially the works comprised of the removal of existing gabion boxes, construction of reinforced concrete channel and the construction of 3 culverts (footbridges) at Arpenteur Street, Canal Bathurst, and near Briquetterie School.

During the course of the works due to technical problems, the initial design had to be modified. The scope of works for the reinforced concrete channel was reviewed. Subsequently, several modifications were carried out. Moreover, during construction, the residents started complaining about the progress of the works and the proposed design stating that prior to the gabion works, there was earlier the presence of a channel in masonry in the centre of the stream. Despite all necessary actions taken by my Ministry, the contractor was unable to proceed with the works expeditiously due to lack of resources.

- (d) A total amount of Rs3,682,846.27 has been paid to the contractor.

In view of the risk of flooding the project had to be included under the Emergency Rehabilitation Programme.

The contract was reallocated to Best Construct Co Ltd on 15 July 2008 for the sum of Rs45,365,259.29. Since the first contract was awarded during the financial year 2004/2005 there has been a substantial increase in rates when the contract was reallocated.

The remaining works consisted of -

- (i) the construction of concrete in-situ drain for a length of about 1 km from Ste Marie Bridge downstream;
- (ii) dredging of the stream to remove vegetation and debris throughout the length being considered;
- (iii) modification of existing services – water and waste water and CEB;
- (iv) reconstruction of 3 Footbridges bridges at –
 - a. Briquetterie Govt. School
 - b. Arpenteur Bridge
 - c. Canal Bathurst, and
- (v) removal of existing gabions boxes.

Given the fact the works are being carried out within the stream itself, the following have been the major causes for delay -

- (i) working in river condition whereby the fluctuating water levels due to rainfall hampered considerably the works since its start;
- (ii) frequent discharges of textile waste from the neighbouring textile industries into the Stream. The working environment was injurious to health and there was need to wait for the waste effluent to recede before workers could proceed;
- (iii) during the excavation, it was noted that the formation after excavating 300mm was not stable and the design had to be changed to accommodate the channel base. Consultant proposed that the base had to be filled with stones (spalls) until the bed was rigid enough for the drain works, and

- (iv) diversion of services and liaison with CWA for fittings.

To date the contractor, Best Construct Co Ltd, has been paid Rs30,672,276.79 (excl.VAT) for works carried out and total cost amounts to Rs33 m. i.e Rs3. m to Laxmanbhai Co Ltd and Rs30 m. to Best Construct. On the basis of project values, there is no excess money paid.

The revised completion date is 30 December 2010 (extension of time still to be determined) and maintenance period is one year.

STE CROIX MARKET - TENDERS

(No. 1A/115) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Ste Croix market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to -

- (a) if tenders were launched therefor and if so -
 - (i) when,
 - (ii) the names of the bidders, indicating the amount quoted,
 - (iii) the name of the successful bidder and,
 - (iv) the duration of the works, and
- (b) the number of stalls to be constructed, indicating the mode of allocation thereof.

Reply: The Municipal Council of Port Louis has been requested to provide the required information and same will be placed in the Library once they are made available.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND – NGOs

(No. 1B/116) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund, he will table a list of the Non-Governmental Organisations which have benefitted therefrom, indicating

- (a) their names,

- (b) the projects to be funded, and
- (c) the amount disbursed as at to-date.

Reply: I am herewith tabling the list of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which have benefitted from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund.

The list provides –

- (i) the names of the NGOs;
- (ii) the project which have been funded, and
- (iii) the amount disbursed as at to date.

COMITÉ CLUB MAURICE – BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. 1A/117) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Comité Club Maurice*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the *Comité*, information as to the –

- (a) role and composition of the Board thereof;
- (b) amount of fund raised in terms of sponsorship for the –
 - (i) *Jeux de la Francophonie* 2009 held in Lebanon, and for
 - (ii) CJSOI Games 2010, and
- (c) amount of fund raised for the IOIG Games 2011, as at to date.

Reply: The role of the *Comité Club Maurice* is to provide support in the preparation of athletes participating in major international games. It lays emphasis on building team spirit, developing a sense of patriotism and sensitising athletes on anti-doping issues.

The composition of the Committee is as follows –

Chairman

Mr G. Moteea

Members

Mr V. Gungaram

Mr Jacques de Navacelle

Mr S. Goboodun

Mr D. Giraud

Mr I. Jeeawoody

Mr N. Gaya
 Mr Dean Ah-chuen
 Mrs P. Chéry-Lebon
 Mr Y. Oree
 Mr E. Ricco

Co-opted Members

Dr. K. Dassyne
 Mr P. Dhoomun

With regard to part (b) of the question, the amount raised is as follows –

(i)	<i>Jeux de la Francophonie</i> 2009	Rs450,000
(ii)	CJSOI Games 2010	Rs500,000

Concerning part (c) of the question, a short list of sponsors has been prepared and negotiations are ongoing with the concerned private and public companies to obtain the required funding for the IOIG Games.

CONSTRUCTION PRICE INDEX –COSTS TREND

(No. 1A/118) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Construction Price Index, he will state the –

- (a) trend of construction costs during the year 2010, indicating the contribution of the costs of steel bars, cement and labour thereto, and
- (b) measures that are being taken to cushion the impact of the increasing costs of construction, especially on the first time home buyers.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, on the basis of the figures available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), it is noted that, during period January to September this year, the Construction Price Index decreased from 100.3 in January to 98.8 in March and then went up to 100.2 in May, to 100.4 in June, to 100.9 in July and declined marginally to 100.8 in August and September. These are mainly due to changes in the costs of materials, namely, steel bars and cement. The price of steel bars dropped in March 2010, went up in May and June 2010 and then

went down slightly in August 2010 while the price of cement went down in March 2010. The contribution of these materials to the change in the monthly Construction Price Index is given in the Table which I am tabling. The cost of labour has, however, remained unchanged.

I have already replied to part (b) of this question in the answer I provided in respect of PQ 1B/575.

This Government has already initiated measures to address housing issues. As spelt out in the Government Program 2010-2015, we are committed to building greater synergy and coordination between the different poverty reduction strategies and programme for higher efficiency and effectiveness gains in the national drive against poverty. Social housing is one of the main focuses for intervention in this fight against poverty. In this context, this Government plans to complete the construction of some 550 low cost housing units by mid 2011 and some 10,000 additional housing units for the lower and middle income groups by 2015.

As a caring Government, we are taking appropriate measures for addressing the needs of each and every segment of the population. As I have indicated in my past interventions, we need to strike the right balance between our national socio-economic objectives and the special needs of some sections of the population, including those needing to acquire or construct their houses.

MUSIC – ONLINE PIRACY

(No. 1A/119) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to music, he will state how the rights of the artists are being protected, in view of the accessibility thereof online.

Reply: Presently, the rights of artists are protected under the Copyright Act 1997. However, there is much difficulty in administrating the rights of artists, especially regarding online piracy, as it is a complex one. Digital Rights Management is a global problem as internet is a pervasive network. This issue is an active subject of discussion at the level of World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

As stated in my reply to PQ 1B/576, my Ministry is currently working with WIPO on a new Bill, the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Bill which will also address the issue of online piracy.

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL – LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/120) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the Black River District Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating, in each case –

- (a) the date on which their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid out to them, as at to date.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as same is made available.

JEAN LEBRUN HALL, LES SALINES - RECONSTRUCTION

(No. 1A/121) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Jean Lebrun Hall, at Les Salines, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if it is proposed to have it pulled down and replaced by a new one and if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that the Municipal Council of Port Louis proposes to pull down the Jean Lebrun Hall at Les Salines and reconstruct a new one thereat.

I am further informed that a team of Consultants has already been appointed for the preparation of the tender document for the project.

CEB - SALARIES COMMISSIONER - REPORT

(No. 1A/122) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the report submitted by Mr Bijaye Appanna, appointed Salaries Commissioner by the Central Electricity Board in July 2009, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to –

- (a) the date on which it was submitted;
- (b) if the same can be tabled, and
- (c) if the recommendations thereof regarding the staff employees, manual workers and pensioners have been implemented and if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that Mr Bijaye Appanna was appointed in August 2009 to carry out a Job Evaluation and Compensation Review Exercise. He submitted his report on 30 October 2009. A copy of the report is being tabled.

As regards part (c), on 14 November 2009 the report was submitted to the Trade Unions of the Central Electricity Board for submission of any explanations/clarifications they required by the end of November 2009. On 13 January 2010, a Collective Agreement was signed with the CEB Staff Association (CEBSA) and the CEB Workers Union (CEBWU) and option forms were issued. On 10 February 2010, 675 out of 1,065 manual employees and 802 out of 883 staff employees had opted for the new terms and conditions which were effective as from 01 July 2009.

The Union of Employees of the CEB (UECEB) did not sign the Collective Agreement and requested to finalise the Procedural Agreement document in the first instance. On 08 April 2010, a Procedural Agreement was signed with UECEB. The UECEB referred the matter to the Employment Relations Tribunal where both parties agreed that the UECEB would submit to Mr Appanna their list of residual issues, errors and omissions for his consideration.

On 25 October 2010, Mr Appanna submitted the Errors and Omissions Report which has been circulated to all the three Unions for further discussions.

As regards the pension issue, the CEB Staff Pension Fund and the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund commissioned Hewitt Ltd to carry out an actuarial valuation to determine the financial position of the two Pension Funds. The Hewitt report and the recommendations of Appanna pertaining to pensions are being examined by the Finance Committee of the Central Electricity Board.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/123) MRs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating, in each case -

- (a) the date on which their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as same is made available.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL - MAYOR &
COUNCILLORS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS**

(No. 1A/124) **MRs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the Mayor and the Councillors of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the number thereof attended by the Mayor and Councillors separately, indicating the –

- (a) countries visited, and
- (b) total cost thereof in each case.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as the exercise will be completed.

CITE BARKLY - KOLEKTIF DRWA POU ENN BON LECOL- PETITION

(No. 1A/125) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he has taken cognizance of a petition addressed by the *Kolektif Drwa Pou Enn Bon Lecol* of Cité Barkly, Beau Bassin, in respect of the Barkly Government School and if so, will he state the actions taken, if any.

Reply: On 25 October 2010, the Directorate of Zone 2 of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources received a petition from the *Kolektif Drwa Pou Enn Bon Lecol* regarding the performance of Barkly Government School which is a ZEP school.

The Zone Director met a delegation of the *Kolektif* on the same date when it called at the school to hand over the petition to the Headmaster.

Representatives of the *Kolektif* were convened to a meeting with the Director, Zone 2 on 28 October 2010. Following discussions, the representatives of the *Kolektif* informed that they would be submitting a series of recommendations to the Ministry in due course. It was also proposed that the Ministry and the *Kolektif* would work in close collaboration to improve the school's performance and image.

A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for the end of November 2010.

The ZEP Project was initiated in 2003 with the objective to give special attention and priority to schools with low performance at CPE, namely those scoring less than 40% CPE pass

rate during five consecutive years prior to 2003. The idea was to extend positive reinforcement in terms of human resources, infrastructure, differentiated pedagogy and other support measures including empowering the Head Teacher, the school community, the staff, the parents, the community-based associations, the NGOs and business organisations. As a result of measures taken during the past years, some ZEP schools have improved significantly. However, others have stagnated and a few like Barkly G.S have encountered other problems which have led to poor performance and consequently resulted in a substantial drop in the CPE pass rate over the last few years. Barkly Government School scored a record low of 9.3% pass rate in 2009.

Currently, there are 30 ZEP schools, including one in Rodrigues and two in Agalega.

The two areas on which attention has been focused lately are (a) reduction of rate of absenteeism and (b) improvement of CPE results.

(a) Rate of Absenteeism

Following efforts deployed by the Ministry, the overall rate of absenteeism in ZEP schools has decreased from 15.7% in 2007 to 12.9% in 2008 and 13.0% in 2009 (excluding the effect of the H1N1 pandemic).

However, sustaining the rate of absenteeism in some schools is a huge challenge. Beyond regular meetings, Parent Mediators have conducted home visits. The Private Sector, NGOs and VIPs are also giving a helping hand.

High rates of absenteeism are observed in most ZEP schools following outings, Sports Day and Music day. Other reasons relate to seasonal health problems, religious beliefs, etc. High rates of absenteeism in ZEP schools can also be attributed to abject poverty including poor housing facilities, broken families, poor parental involvement and poor scholastic ambition on their part. It has been observed that absenteeism decreased following the introduction of the supplementary school feeding programme applicable to ZEP schools. Other affirmative measures taken by Government include major school infrastructural works.

(b) CPE results

The trend for overall CPE pass rate for ZEP schools is as follows -

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Overall CPE pass rate (%)	30.9	31.4	32.8	36.5	36.0	35.9	35.3	Not available

Best performing ZEP schools (above 50 %) -

	2007	2008	2009
	% pass	% pass	% pass
Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus RC (Rod)	58.5	63.2	62.1
Bois des Amourettes GS	58.3	69.6	61.1
Stanley GS	51.0	49.5	60.7
Espitalier Noël GS	37.8	47.9	53.8
Nuckchady GS	29.4	16.7	51.5
Cascavelle GS	28.9	48.0	50.0

There are also many individual good performances where the pupils secure admission to National Colleges and become the pride of both the parents and the school community.

Least performing ZEP schools (below 20 %) -

	2007	2008	2009
	% pass	% pass	% pass
Barkly GS	20.8	24.1	9.3
La Briquetterie GS	22.6	9.6	13.5
Serge Coutet GS	17.9	13.7	16.1
Guy Rozemont GS	37.5	19.0	17.2
Marcel Cabon GS	37.8	25.0	19.6

Case of Barkly GS

The case of Barkly GS is unique. The school's catchment area is Cité Barkly. Because of stigmatisation, many parents prefer to send their children to other schools: Phillippe Rivalland RCA, Vel Govinden GS and Andre Glover GS. Furthermore, there are acute staffing problems. Educators do not wish to be posted at Barkly GS because of perceived insecurity in the region. Existing educators regularly request for transfer out of the school. Since 2004, the school's Head Master has changed seven times. This results in an unstable staffing situation which impacts negatively on the school performance.

All the above conditions have led to the CPE results dropping significantly from 24.1% in 2008 to 9.3% in 2009.

Further, there is low parental involvement in school activities. Parents are generally absent from the school for working sessions but regularly show up with an aggressive attitude when a perceived problem arises.

There is constant monitoring of the situation at Barkly Government School.

After seven years of existence of the current ZEP project, my Ministry is currently reviewing the whole situation pertaining to the strategy adopted so far. Whilst it has been observed that the strategy has worked positively for some schools which have significantly improved their performance, others have stagnated and some have deteriorated.

Some of the weaknesses identified within the overall ZEP Project are as follows -

- (i) the ZEP Mission is not yet well understood and shared by all stakeholders involved in the ZEP Project;
- (ii) ZEP schools in general suffer from a lack of interest and involvement from the immediate school community. Despite the good work being done by the Parent Mediators and liaison officers supplied by the private sector, mobilising the school community and parents still remains a challenge;
- (iii) working in a ZEP school with its difficulties requires that the Head Masters possess specific skills to deal with such specific and complex problems which unfortunately not all Headmasters possess;
- (iv) educators represent the first point of contact with students. The stigma and difficulty associated with working in ZEP schools instigate a negative attitude on the part of some educators when they are posted to ZEP schools. In addition, Educators have to deal with aggressive parents at times. Some Educators have been physically and verbally assaulted by parents. The ZEP sector therefore does not attract the best adapted teachers despite the eligibility to draw an allowance when working in ZEP schools, and
- (v) the branding of schools as ZEP has unfortunately led to a stigma of the school and its students. This has resulted in a decline in the school population of the ZEP schools. Parents are not willing to send their wards to such schools.

When the project started in 2003, the school population in ZEP schools was some 12,000 pupils. Today it has gone down to 8,500 pupils.

It has also been noted that a few non-ZEP schools located in other pockets of poverty require special attention and support. The whole ZEP scheme therefore needs to be revisited and a re-thinking of the present strategy has already started to be carried out at the level of my Ministry. All underperforming schools have to be taken on board and those schools doing well in the ZEP be removed from the list of ZEP schools without, however, depriving them of the current support they benefit from. All support and measures will be assessed and evaluated and a new orientation given to the whole scheme.

The recommendations that would be formulated would be discussed at the level of the ZEP Council where representatives of all stakeholders meet regularly under my chairmanship to discuss issues and approve the ZEP Action Plan.

The next meeting has been scheduled in the second week of December.

RESIDENCE FLAMBOYANT, RICHELIEU - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

(No. 1A/126) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Centre at Résidence Flamboyant, Richelieu, she will state the activities that are run thereat, indicating if all the machines and equipment are in good working order.

Reply: The Regional Development Centre situated at Résidence Flamboyant, Richelieu was inaugurated in December 2008. The Centre is housed in a building that was initially prototype housing units vested to my Ministry by the Mauritius Research Council. The building, which comprises three small rooms, a kitchen and a toilet, was renovated by SOTRAVIC Ltd under its Corporate Social Responsibility.

I am informed that the Centre was set up to cater for unemployed and retrenched female workers residing in the vicinity. Activities organised thereat included, *inter alia*, three workshops, namely, in serigraphy, catering services and patchwork. Kitchen gardening is also carried out at the Centre.

Each workshop involved an average of six women who received relevant training aimed at setting up income generating activities. The training for catering services was provided by *École Hôtelière*, that of Serigraphy was dispensed by a resource person whilst officers of the National Women's Council provided the training in patchwork.

To undertake the above activities, the following equipment was provided at the Centre -

- (a) a “*Carousel*” for the project of Serigraphy;
- (b) a refrigerator, an oven, a metal cupboard, cutlery and other utensils for the catering services;
- (c) two sewing machines for patchwork, and
- (d) tools for kitchen gardening.

Whilst the activities started fairly well in the beginning, the beneficiaries’ involvement and the lack of commitment on their behalf resulted in the poor implementation of the project. The women involved in the catering and serigraphy workshops did not sustain the activities. In the meantime, a craft worker from the National Women’s Council is providing training to some ten women in patchwork and other related craft.

In view of the lack of commitment of beneficiaries, the Ministry has decided to transfer the “*Carousel*” to the National Women Development Centre at Phoenix. The National Women Entrepreneur Council will make optimum use of that equipment whereby a larger number of women will be able to benefit from training in serigraphy. Arrangements have also been made for its transfer to Phoenix.

Concurrently, the remaining equipment will be transferred to Richelieu Women Centre and put at the disposal of women attending the Centre for training purposes. Given that the “*Carousel*” and the sewing machines have not been used on a regular basis, appropriate servicing would be ensured prior to their transfer to the Women Centre.

In light of the above, my Ministry is proposing to make maximum use of the infrastructure at Résidence Flamboyant. Given that there has been recently an upsurge of cases of children victim of violence, my Ministry has embarked on preventive campaigns aimed at sensitising all parties concerned, be it parents, authorities, NGOs and the Civil Society on the need to assume their responsibility for the well being and safety of our children. In that context, my Ministry is considering to use the Centre for outreach programmes for children. Discussions to that effect are being held with the National Children’s Council and NGOs of the region.

RICHELIEU - FOOTBALL & VOLLEYBALL GROUNDS

(No. 1A/127) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the football and volleyball grounds at Richelieu, he will state if measures will be taken to ensure that the inhabitants of Richelieu, especially the youth, can access these facilities at night.

Reply: The football ground is vested with the Ministry of Youth and Sports while the volleyball ground belongs to the Black River District Council. However, both the football and the volleyball grounds are managed and maintained by the Black River District Council.

To have access to these facilities at night there is need for the provision of lighting. However, due to limited funds, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is giving priority to grounds being used for training by first and second division football teams.

In the meantime, the Ministry will liaise with the Ministry of Local Government and the Black River District Council to see whether they can do needful to provide lighting thereat from provisions under the Local Infrastructure Fund.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ACADEMIC YEAR 2011

(No. 1A/128) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to resumption of studies in academic year 2011, he will state –

- (a) if there will be any changes in the number of
 - (i) public, and
 - (ii) private non-fee paying, secondary schools in operation and, if so, state the reasons therefor.
- (b) the number of seats available at Form I Level in -
 - (i) State National colleges
 - (ii) State Regional schools
 - (iii) non fee-paying secondary schools and
- (c) the list of institutions offering pre-vocational classes.

Reply: Concerning part (a) (i) of the question, with regard to public schools, there will be no change in the number of State Secondary Schools in operation for the resumption of studies in 2011.

As regards part (a) (ii), as far as grant-aided private secondary schools in Mauritius are concerned, the number of schools will decrease from 87 in the year 2010 to 85 in 2011. Two schools namely Byron College and Grand Bois College will no longer be registered as grant-aided private secondary schools in 2011 for the following reasons -

- (i) these two schools have a very low student population (which is below the minimum threshold of 150 students in mainstream) thereby increasing the cost per

student to an unreasonable level. As at October 2010, Grand Bois College and Byron College had the following student population in the mainstream –

	Number of students in mainstream
Grand Bois College	95
Byron College	80

(ii) the perennial strained industrial relations prevailing in the schools.

As regards part (b) (i) to (iii), the number of seats available at Form I for the resumption of studies in academic year 2011 is as follows –

	Number of seats in Form I in 2011
(i) National Schools (State)	1,715
(ii) Regional Schools (State)	6,025
(iii) Private Aided Secondary Schools	10,603

As regards part (c), the list of institutions offering pre-vocational classes in 2011 –

STATE-OWNED SCHOOLS	
ZONE 1	
1.	ADOLPHE DE PLEVITZ SSS
2.	B. RAMLALLAH SSS
3.	GOODLANDS SSV
4.	IMMACULEE CONCEPTION SSV
5.	FRANK RICHARD SSS
6.	LADY S. RAMGOOLAM SSS
7.	PAILLES SSS
8.	PAMPLEMOUSSES SSS
9.	PORT LOUIS NORTH SSS
10.	PROF. HASSAN RAFFA SSS
11.	R. PRAYAG SSS

12.	RIV. DU REMPART SSV
13.	TERRE ROUGE SSS
14.	TRIOLET SSS

ZONE 2

15.	CAMP DE MASQUE STATE COLLEGE
16.	BON ACCUEIL STATE COLLEGE
17.	B. AIR RIVIERE SECHE SSS
18.	BEAU BASSIN SSS
19.	EBENE SSS
20.	GANDHIAN BASIC SCHOOL
21.	MANILALL DOCTOR SSS
22.	QUARTIER MILITAIRE SSS
23.	R. GUJADHUR SSS
24.	SEBASTOPOL SSS
25.	SMT INDIRA GANDHI SSS

ZONE 3

26.	RIV. DES ANGUILLES STATE COLLEGE
27.	DHUNPUTH LALLAH SSS
28.	FLOREAL SSS
29.	FOREST SIDE SSS
30.	M. SANGEELEE SSS
31.	ST AUBIN SSS
32.	SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SSS

ZONE 4

33.	BAMBOUS SSS
34.	LA GAULETTE SSS
35.	PALMA SSS
36.	QUATRE BORNES SSS
37.	PHOENIX SSS

38.	SODNAC SSS
39.	SWAMI SIVANANDA SSS
40.	VACOAS SSS (HOLLYROOD)
41.	VACOAS SSS(ST PAUL ROAD)
42.	MURDAY SSV

PRIVATE SECONDARY GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS	
ZONE 1	
1.	BHUJOHARRY COLLEGE
2.	BRADLEY COLLEGE
3.	COLLEGE DU BPS FATIMA
4.	COLLEGE IDEAL
5.	COLLEGE PERE LAVAL
6.	COSMOPOLITAN COLLEGE (BOYS)
7.	COSMOPOLITAN COLLEGE (GIRLS)
8.	DAYANAND ANGLO VEDIC COLLEGE (Morcellement St André)
9.	DAYANAND ANGLO VEDIC COLLEGE (Port Louis)
10.	FRIENDSHIP COLLEGE (BOYS)
11.	FRIENDSHIP COLLEGE (GIRLS)
12.	INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
13.	ISLAMIC CULTURAL COLLEGE (Port Louis)
14.	LORETO COLLEGE (Port Louis)
15.	MADAD UL ISLAM COLLEGE
16.	MEDCO-ALEX BHUJOHARRY SECONDARY SCHOOL
17.	MEDCO CASSIS SECONDARY SCHOOL
18.	MEDCO TRINITY SECONDARY SCHOOL
19.	MERTON COLLEGE
20.	PORT LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL
21.	SOONDUR MUNRAKHUN COLLEGE
22.	ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S COLLEGE

23.	UNIVERSAL COLLEGE
ZONE 2	
24.	COLLEGE DE LA CONFIANCE
25.	COLLEGE DES VILLES SOEURS
26.	COLLEGE DU B.P.S (Beau Bassin)
27.	DARWIN COLLEGE
28.	LORETO COLLEGE (Rose Hill)
29.	LORETO COLLEGE (St Pierre)
30.	LYCEE DE BEAU-BASSIN
31.	MAYFLOWER COLLEGE
32.	MODERN COLLEGE
33.	NEW EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE
34.	NELSON COLLEGE
35.	NEW DEVTON COLLEGE
36.	PATTEN COLLEGE (GIRLS)
37.	QUARTIER MILITAIRE COLLEGE
38.	ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE
39.	SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE
ZONE 3	
40.	AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
41.	CUREPIPE COLLEGE
42.	HAMILTON COLLEGE (BOYS)
43.	HAMILTON COLLEGE (GIRLS)
44.	KEATS COLLEGE
45.	LORETO COLLEGE (Bambous Virieux)
46.	LORETO COLLEGE (Curepipe)
47.	LORETO COLLEGE (Mahebourg)
48.	MAURITIUS COLLEGE (BOYS)
49.	MAURITIUS COLLEGE (GIRLS)
50.	NOTRE DAME COLLEGE

51.	RENASCENCE COLLEGE
52.	SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
53.	THANACODY COLLEGE
54.	UNITY COLLEGE
55.	WINDSOR COLLEGE (GIRLS)
ZONE 4	
56.	COLLEGE DU ST ESPRIT (Rivière Noire)
57.	COLLEGE DU SAINT ESPRIT (Quatre Bornes)
58.	ISLAMIC CULTURAL COLLEGE (Belle Rose)
59.	LE LYCEE MAURICIEN
60.	LORETO COLLEGE (Quatre Bornes)
61.	MEDCO CLAIRFONDS SECONDARY SCHOOL
62.	N SADDUL COLLEGE
63.	PATTEN COLLEGE (BOYS)
64.	ST HELENA'S COLLEGE
65.	ST MARY'S WEST COLLEGE

RESIDENCE CANDOS - ABANDONED CONCRETE HOUSE

(No. 1A/129) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)

asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the –

- (a) existence of an abandoned house in a derelict state belonging to the N., Family representing health and security hazards to the inhabitants, and
- (b) remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that following a site visit effected near Residence Candos, it has been noted that there was an abandoned concrete house which was not in a derelict state, but with broken window panes. However, the yard of the house was found in a tidy state.

WILSON AVENUE, QUATRE BORNES -- BARE LAND

(No. 1A/130) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)

asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to a bare land situated at Wilson Avenue, Quatre Bornes, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to if an application for the use thereof as a storage yard has been submitted thereto and if so
 - (i) the date it was received;
 - (ii) if it has been granted, and
- (b) state if he is aware of the hazards that it would represent to the inhabitants thereof, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that no application has been received for the use of a bare land at Wilson Avenue as a storage yard.

I am further informed that the site under reference is being used by the Wastewater Management Authority as a temporary depot for materials being used in connection with sewerage works being carried out in that locality.