

No. 04 of 2010



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Tuesday 22 June 2010**

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### **ADJOURNMENT**

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*Members*

*Members*

**THE CABINET**

**(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK,  
FRCP

*Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs  
and External Communications*

Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK,  
FRCP

*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and  
Public Utilities*

Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK

*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social  
Integration and Economic Empowerment*

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth

*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and  
Economic Development*

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo

*Minister of Public Infrastructure, National  
Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping*

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell

*Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration  
and International Trade*

Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS

*Minister of Housing and Lands*

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	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members*

*Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

*Mr Speaker*

Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK,  
GOSK

*Deputy Speaker*

Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing

*Deputy Chairman of Committees*

Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez

*Clerk of the National Assembly*

Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit

*Deputy Clerk*

Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena

*Clerk Assistant*

Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi

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Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie

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Munroop, Mr Kishore

**MAURITIUS**

**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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**Debate No. 04 of 2010**

**Sitting of Tuesday 22 June 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)*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### COMMITTEES – MEMBERS – APPOINTMENT

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I wish to inform the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 69(1), and following consultations I have had with both sides of the House, I have nominated the following hon. Members to serve on the Committee of Selection.

The hon. Ms Marie Geneviève Stéphanie Anquetil

The hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

The hon. Alan Ganoo

The hon. Eric Joseph Raoul Guimbeau

The hon. Ahmed Reza Goolam Mamode Issack

The hon. Joseph Christian Léopold

The hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed Hossen

The hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun

In accordance with the same Standing Order, I shall be the Chairman of this Committee.

Further, the Committee of Selection met under my chairmanship this morning, and has approved the composition of the following Sessional Select Committees as hereunder –

#### **I. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

The hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea

The hon. Surendra Dayal

The hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree Deerpalsing

The hon. Eric Joseph Raoul Guimbeau

The hon. Hafeez Abdullah Hossen

The hon. Ahmed Reza Goolam Mamode Issack

The hon. Dhiraj Singh Khamajeet

The hon. Mrs Marie Noëlle Françoise Labelle

The hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun

In addition, I have to announce that, in accordance with Standing Order 69(2), I have appointed the hon. Alan Ganoo as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

## **II. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

The hon. Surendra Dayal

The hon. Alan Ganoo

The hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo

The hon. Jangbahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola Roopchand Seetaram

In accordance with Standing Order 69(3), the hon. Deputy Speaker is an *ex officio* Member and I am the Chairman of the Committee.

## **III. HOUSE COMMITTEE**

The hon. Ms Marie Geneviève Stéphanie Anquetil

The hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

The hon. Dhiraj Singh Khamajeet

The hon. Joseph Christian Léopold

The hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie

In accordance with Standing Order 69(4), the hon. Deputy Speaker will be the Chairman of the House Committee.

## **IV. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON ICAC**

I also have to inform the House that, pursuant to section 59(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, Dr. the hon. Prime Minister has designated the following hon. Members, namely

—

The hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree Deerpalsing

Dr. the hon. Rihun Raj Hawoldar

The hon. Ms Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud

The hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed Hossen

The hon. Jangbahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola Roopchand Seetaram

from Government side to serve on the Parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has designated the following hon. Members, namely –

The hon. Jean-Claude Barbier

The hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

The hon. Keechong Li Kwong Wing

The hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo

from the Opposition side to serve on the Parliamentary Committee.

Further, pursuant to section 59(3) of the Act, Dr. the hon. Prime Minister has designated Dr. the hon. Rihun Raj Hawoldar as Chairman of the Committee.

**PAPERS LAID**

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

**Ministry of Education and Human Resources** -

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board for the year ended 30 June 2009.

**Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security** -

- (a) The Annual Report of the Agricultural Marketing Board for the year 2005 and 2006.
- (b) The Annual Report of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board for the year 2006.

**Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands** -

- (a) The Municipal Council of Port Louis (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No.139 of 2010).
- (b) The Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No.140 of 2010).
- (c) The Municipal Council of Curepipe (General Rate) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No.141 of 2010).

**Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection -**

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 136 of 2010).
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 13) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 137 of 2010).
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 14) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 138 of 2010).

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****NATIONAL ECONOMY - GDP, BUDGET DEFICIT, PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT &  
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the national economy, he will give updated estimates, for 2009 and 2010, of the Gross Domestic Product growth, the budget deficit, the public sector debt and the balance of payments, and say how they compare with the 2010 Budget Speech figures, indicating –

- (a) the revenue and expenditure variations likely to occur in 2010;
- (b) when the National Residential Property Tax and tax on interest will be abolished;
- (c) how the stimulus package is to be withdrawn, and
- (d) how the foreign/domestic public debt mix has evolved.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will answer PQ No. 1B/91 on the National Residential Property Tax, PQ No. 1B/92 on the tax on interest and part (c) of PQ No. 1B/93 on the Additional stimulus package in my reply to this PNQ, as the answers to these PQs are related.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2010 Budget Speech presented an optimistic view of the global economic outlook for 2010, with positive impact on GDP growth in Mauritius. In fact, it is clear that underlying the Budget preparation was: I quote from paragraphs 40 and 41 of the Budget Speech –

“We need to shape the recovery to seize the opportunities from a world economy that is on the mend. There are encouraging projections of a recovery in 2010, notwithstanding rising unemployment in the US and some other countries. The IMF is now estimating a smaller contraction in world output of 1.1% in 2009 and a 3.3% growth in 2010. The United States, Japan, and most of the Euro area countries will have positive output growth in the second half of this year. GDP in China and India are forecast to expand by

9% and 6.4% in 2010 respectively. The economies of Africa are expected to grow by 1.7% in 2009 and 4% in 2010.

World trade volume, which is estimated to contract by 12% this year, is forecast to expand by 2.5% next year. And, clearly, 2010 will be the year of the global economic recovery.

For Mauritius, there is manifestly a return to the trend growth path. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) is predicting a growth rate of around 2.8% for 2009 and 4.3% for 2010. By 2011, it is expected that the economy will return to its growth path of 5% and higher. There is renewed dynamism, and we will harness it to shape the recovery”.

For the year 2009, the latest estimate of GDP growth from the CSO stands at around 3.1%. For 2010, the initial estimate was 4.3%. There are indications that it will be in the range of 3.5% to 4%, depending, of course, on the depth and duration of the currency crisis in Europe, and how far the euro will slide against the US dollar and the rupee, and the impact on growth in the euro zone countries, which are our main markets.

As regards the budget deficit, the Budget projected a deficit of 4.5% for the six months period ending December 2009 and 4.5% for 2010. However, the revised budget deficit for the second half of 2009 is 4.1%, and the latest revised estimate for 2010 is 4.1%.

Concerning the public sector debt, it was estimated at Rs167.1 billion, that is, 59.6% of GDP in the Budget Speech for 2009. The actual figures show a public sector debt of Rs169.4 billion, representing 61.6% of GDP, and I am informed that the increase is due to contingency borrowings, over and above the planned Public Sector Borrowing Requirements, to cushion unexpected shocks from the global economic recession. For 2010, the projected public sector debt in the Budget was Rs179.1 billion, representing 58.7 % of GDP. The latest estimates indicate that the public sector debt for 2010 will be around Rs178 billion, representing 61.1% of GDP.

Concerning the balance of payments, it was estimated in the Budget that the current account deficit for the six months ending December 2009 would be at around 9.9 % of GDP. For 2010, the Budget did not provide an estimate for the balance of payments. However, the Bank of

Mauritius is estimating that the current account deficit would be around 8.8% of GDP. Overall balance of payments would show a deficit of 0.5% of GDP.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the 4.5% of GDP budget deficit target for fiscal year 2010 was based on total revenue of Rs66.8 billion, and total expenditure of Rs80.4 billion. During the first five months of 2010, total revenue collected was Rs25.3 billion, while total expenditure has reached Rs25.5 billion.

Taking into account seasonality factors affecting cash collection for the remaining seven months, as well as the adverse international developments I have just mentioned and their likely impact on domestic economic activities and the tax base, it is estimated that total government receipts would be some Rs1.5 billion below the original estimates.

However, on the expenditure side, it is estimated that total payments would be some Rs3.2 billion lower than the Estimates. Such underspending would arise mainly because of delays in filling of posts and in implementation of capital projects.

The net result would be that the budget deficit is expected to be lower by some Rs1.7 billion than the figure presented in the 2010 Budget Speech. Allowing for the lower nominal GDP figure, the budget deficit, as a percentage of GDP, is likely to be 4.1% instead of 4.5%.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the amount of revenues collected in respect of the National Residential Property Tax are -

2006-2007	Rs119 m.
2007-2008	Rs121 m.
2008-2009	Rs136 m.
July-Dec 2009	Rs75 m.

As regards tax collections on interest, they are for income years -

2006-2007	Rs347 m.
2007-2008	Rs480 m.
2008-2009	Rs463 m.
July-Dec 2009	Rs211 m.

This Government has taken a commitment to abolish the National Residential Property Tax and tax on interest, as announced recently in the Government Programme 2010-2015. The NRPT and tax on interest will be abolished as from income year 2010 itself. Other changes as regards tax policy will be announced in the forthcoming budget.

As regards part (c), the issue of withdrawing the stimulus package does not arise at this stage.

Regarding part (d), public sector external debt is now estimated at Rs33.6 billion as at end December 2010, compared to an initial estimate of Rs38 billion. Domestic debt would be Rs144.4 billion in 2010 instead of Rs141 billion.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will start with the budget deficit and the public debt. As far as the budget deficit is concerned, when he spoke on 07 December, the present hon. Minister of Finance accused the then hon. Minister of Finance of manipulating figures and said that, according to him, the budget deficit would be 6.6% and not the 4.5% mentioned by the then Minister of Finance. We are informed now that the budget deficit is likely to be less than 4.5% - around 4.1%. Will the present hon. Minister of Finance agree that he was completely off target?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by my technicians of the following figures, which I have just given to the House.

**Mr Bérenger:** As far as public debt is concerned, we have just heard that, this year, we are going to move above the 60% safety ceiling, going by the IMF, World Bank International Practice, and that the total public sector debt is likely to be 61%. Can I know whether the present hon. Minister of Finance is worried that we are climbing, and that it will be over the 60% benchmark?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, debt is a matter of concern to everybody, especially when it is on the increase in absolute terms and also as a matter of percentage of GDP. We are going to monitor and see to it that the percentage of debt to GDP is on the decrease. It has been on decrease for some time, but has increased recently. Of course, we are concerned with the recommendations made by the IMF. In fact, the Government has legislated in the sense that we should not exceed the 60% ceiling, and we will be taking measures in the future to see to it that it goes back on the declining side again.

**Mr Bérenger:** The former Minister of Finance, on 07 December, told us that the balance of payments was in surplus in 2009 - Rs13.5 billion surplus - and, therefore, that trend was expected to deliver another surplus in 2010. Is the hon. Minister not very worried that we are going to move from a surplus of Rs13.5 billion balance of payments to a deficit - if I heard him correctly - of 0.5%? The former Minister of Finance expected Rs9 billion of FDI in 2010. Will that target be reached? I repeat: is not the hon. Minister deeply disturbed by the fact that we are going to move into deficit, as far as the balance of payments is concerned?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Again, I must say that we are all concerned with deficit in terms of the balance of payments, and there have been circumstances which have made the previous forecast, in fact, worsen. I have just mentioned the figures. With regard to measures that we are going to take, it will be in the light of what is prevailing also on the international economic front. Therefore, we will have to see to it how we can make sure that the situation improves. As I said, we are looking at a number of measures that will be taken very soon.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the hon. Minister say that this measure, as well as the other one, will come into application in the forthcoming Budget. I think I heard him say that the National Residential Property Tax and the tax on savings will be abolished. The term used in the Government Programme is 'phased out'; I don't know why this was used. But, now, we are told that it will be abolished in 2010. Do I take it, therefore, that these two taxes are going to stay in operation until November, at the end of the year's budget, that is, the 2011 Budget, and that there will be no Budget before that?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I have just replied that these two taxes will be abolished for the financial year 2010. Of course, Government has its own agenda. Government has taken commitment with the people of this country that we are going to abolish those two taxes, and we will do so. It is a question of time, and the timing will be at the discretion of Government.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I can move on to the stimulus package. I am very surprised to hear the present Minister of Finance say: the question does not arise. He was dead against the stimulus package, in particular the mechanism for transitional support to private firms. He was dead against; he wanted that to stop immediately whilst in the Opposition. Can I know why he has shifted stand completely with regard to the stimulus package, in particular the mechanism for

transitional support to that terrible private sector that he was denouncing on every occasion? Why this complete change in attitude?

**Mr Jugnauth:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition is totally wrong because...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I know what I have said in the past. I will request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to show to me where I have stated that I am totally against the additional stimulus package.

*(Interruptions)*

What I have said in the past - maybe, to refresh the memory of the hon. Leader of the Opposition - is that the philosophy underlying the coming up with this additional stimulus package should be viewed also in the light of what is happening in the country as a whole, that is, we should be looking at the different sectors which are being caused prejudice by the international economic situation, to which I fully agreed. If you look at my intervention, both outside and in Parliament, I have all the time agreed that there was a difficult economic situation that was affecting the country, especially in the light of what happened in the United States and Europe. What I have said is that we should look also at the workers, the consumers of this country, and that there should be equilibrium between measures that are taken for those sectors and the workers, the consumers, the population at large. I must say, again, that this is the philosophy of this Government. This is the philosophy of the hon. Prime Minister, the Members of this Government and me, with regard to the situation that is prevailing actually.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the present hon. Minister of Finance has asked me to show anywhere he has come out with the stimulus package, I will quote his speech, delivered on 07 December 2009, where, at one point, he goes against the stimulus package in numerous paragraphs, but I will quote just one where he says –

*« Donc, il n'y a pas eu de partage de richesse, contrairement à ce qu'a dit le ministre. »*

We had the same Prime Minister!

*« La compensation salariale de 3.5%, bien qu'insuffisante, est un dû et non pas une faveur, et encore moins un quelconque partage. »*

And he carried on –

*« Le stimulus package de 14 milliards a été maintenu en faveur du secteur privé. »*

*(Interruptions)*

If somebody will not clap on the other side! And the tone is all along...

*(Interruptions)*

I am replying to a question which you allowed him to put!

*(Interruptions)*

If I can move on, Mr Speaker, Sir! Can I know, until now, under that mechanism for transitional support, how much money has been handed over to private firms, and the number of firms that have benefited from this mechanism for transitional support that the present Minister of Finance lost no occasion of denouncing when in Opposition until December last?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I am surprised...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Let the hon. Minister answer now!

**Mr Jugnauth:** ...because when I listen to the quote of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, it supports exactly what I have just said.

*(Interruptions)*

Let me explain again, because probably he has not understood. I was then talking about *partage*. I was talking about equilibrium, that is, when we give consideration to the private sector, we have to give consideration also to the people of this country. So, I will not go further on this.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to how much money...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Jugnauth:** ...has been given to the private sector, of course, I will not have the figures right now, because the question relates to how the stimulus package is to be withdrawn. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition will come with a specific question on how much money has been given - we are a transparent Government - we are going to give all the figures to the Opposition.

**Mr Bérenger:** I move on to the foreign and the domestic mix of the public debt. We saw earlier that the total public debt has moved over the 60% benchmark. The hon. Minister, again, was criticising, when in Opposition, the shift from domestic debt to foreign currency debt. Will he confirm that, in fact, there has been a complete shift from 2005 to 2010? In 2005, public debt was made up of 5% foreign debt, whereas now 25% of our public debt is foreign currency debt?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the debt issue, let me say once again that, for example, in Europe, some countries have been borrowing and, unfortunately, have ended up in a situation where they are not able to service their own debt. Of course, we have to be very careful about the debt situation. I must say that the debt, with regard to foreign borrowings, has been on the increase. I gave an answer with regard to a Parliamentary Question that was put last Tuesday. I understand that the policy of the Ministry of Finance was to see to it that we can cater for future shocks. I understand that the Ministry of Finance did not know how the situation was going to evolve and that, to be on the safe side, we managed to discuss with international financial institutions so that we are prepared. But that does not mean that those borrowings have to be disbursed. But, yet, since we have a number of capital projects that will be implemented in the near future, therefore, that amount of money will be utilised for those projects.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister estimated a downward trend in the economic growth rate from 4.3%, which was estimated for the year 2010, to 3.5%. So, there is definitely a contractionary effect due to a soft external demand; and also, with all the problems arising from the euro crisis, there is downside risk to our growth rate. Would, therefore, the hon. Minister consider extending the stimulus package to the year 2011?

**Mr Jugnauth:** We will consider everything, Mr Speaker, Sir, because now we have a different situation. Now, we have a situation where the European countries themselves are in difficulty, and the euro is declining with regard to both the US dollar and the rupee. Therefore, it is clear that we are facing a totally different economic situation with regard to euro. We have

been working. Since I assumed office, this is the first thing that I did. My priority was to set up a technical committee comprising of the JEC, the Bank of Mauritius, technicians of my Ministry and, of course, other Ministries concerned, to analyse the situation, to assess the impact of the declining euro to the local sectors and to come up with measures. I have just said that we will soon be coming with a number of measures to address this problem. We are going to study this proposal that has been made by the hon. Member also.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** From what I understood, the Minister is not against extending *tel quel* the stimulus package that he has denounced in the past to year 2011.

The second question which I would like to ask the Minister is that the NRPT was specifically raised in order to fund a Local Infrastructural Fund. Now that the NRPT is going to be abolished, can we know from the Minister what will be the fate of all the projects under the Local Infrastructural Fund, especially in view of the fact that budget deficit is going to be reduced as he estimated?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should not rephrase my answer to his liking because I have given an answer. Now he comes and says that I am not *per se* against. I have not said that I am against or I am for. What I am saying is that it will be looked at, and new measures will be taken with regard to the different context.

With regard to the funding of projects under the Local Infrastructural Fund, of course, all the commitments that have been taken will be respected and a new Budget will be presented in November. Then, the hon. Member will see what are the projects that will be financed with regard to local authorities.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since the NRPT and the tax on interest have been abolished because of the unjust and unfair nature of these two taxes, will the hon. Minister consider the possibility, therefore - since he has himself denounced these two taxes - of refunding the poor citizens of this country who have been robbed of millions of rupees as he has just said himself? Can he devise a scheme to refund to the citizens of this country the money that they have been made to pay to the State?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have just finished a campaign. I have not heard any Member of the Opposition, during that campaign, say that when we come to power we are going

to refund all the proceeds of these taxes to the people. So, we should not be demagogic. What has happened has happened, and this is the commitment of Government.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** In view of the fact that there are a couple of projects which are close to the heart of the Minister of Finance regarding the duty-free paradise concept, as well as all the tax incentives that will have to be reintroduced for the planting community, this will create a *manque à gagner* for Government revenues, and on the other hand...

**Mr Speaker:** Sorry! The hon. Minister has said that when the budget will be presented, he will take all this into account. The hon. Member will have to wait for the budget to come and make his observations then. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** The problem is that he has said that, on the one hand, we will have to wait for the November budget and then, in the same breath, he has said that he will be coming with measures very soon. Which is which?

*(Interruptions)*

Can I put a last question? In Opposition, until very recently, the present Minister of Finance accused the previous Minister of Finance of manipulation of statistics, of figures. Will he agree, on the basis of the figures which he has given today, that he was completely wrong? Secondly, on every occasion, he stood against the policy of the then *Alliance sociale*, describing it as being *pro-secteur privé*. Can I know when and what measures are going to be introduced to correct what the present Minister of Finance denounced repeatedly as a pro-private sector budget?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the people of this country have already judged who is wrong and who is right. We are right, because we are part of this Government here. Of course, the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to know what measures will be forthcoming. I will ask him to wait, and then we will see. There are measures that will be taken.

**Mr Speaker:** Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications! Hon. Fakeemeeah!

**POLICE FORCE - PROMOTION EXERCISE**

**(No. 1B/70) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third 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 last promotional examinations in the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) police constables;
- (b) police sergeants, and
- (c) police inspectors

who sat therefor, indicating the dates thereof in each case.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/7 at the sitting of 15 June 2010, that is, last week, whereby I explained that the procedure for the promotion exercise in the Police Force has indeed been set in motion, and I can now say it is expected to be completed by next week.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Prime Minister table the criteria for promotion?

**The Prime Minister:** The criteria for promotion do not depend on the Prime Minister or any Member of the Government. It goes to the Disciplined Forces Commission, and they decide. They have clear criteria, but I suppose they go through those criteria all the time.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that the delay on this issue is a significant factor contributing to the low morale of the Police Force and also contributes to demotivate members of the Police Force, consequently causing the deterioration of law and order being experienced in the country?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, the law and order situation has improved, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't know whether it is a coincidence or not, but let me say that the sitting and the passing of the examination itself is one important aspect of the exercise. The Commissioner of Police has then to go through a list to check whether any police officer – because this has happened in the past, I must say – who has passed the examination is not under suspension, and worse, has not committed any serious offence in the meantime or shown gross negligence, and also that there is no complaint on paper. We have to look at it. That was an exercise which took the time that it

took. I must say that there have been such cases. I am not going to mention them here. I should also say that the passing of the competitive examination does not confer any right to promotion. In any case, when they pass the examination, Mr Speaker, Sir, it will depend on the vacancies that are available. I can tell you now that there is less vacancy than the number of people who have passed the examinations. So, those who don't get promotion will have to wait. But this exercise is ongoing.

As I mentioned - I think it was in February of this year, before the election - we have launched a national policing strategic framework. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a human resource management capability exercise that we have embarked upon. We want to ensure that the right people, with the right skills, are in the right places, in the right numbers, and that is what we are doing.

#### **NPF/MCB LTD CASE – INVESTIGATIONS**

**(No. 1B/71) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to National Pensions Fund/Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd case, he will state if Government will now consider setting up a Commission of Inquiry to look into the matter and, if so, when, and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the NPF/MCB case was uncovered in February 2003, when a shortfall in the accounts of the NPF at the Mauritius Commercial Bank was discovered by the then Principal Accountant of the NPF. The case was referred to the ICAC in February 2003 by the Financial Intelligence Unit.

I am informed that a number of cases, both civil and criminal, are still before the courts. In fact, in one of the criminal cases, the MCB is being prosecuted before the Intermediate Court for the offence of money laundering, in breach of sections 3(2) and 8 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti Money Laundering Act, coupled with section 44(2) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act. I am also informed that the case was lodged on 04 September 2009, and will come for trial on 17 September 2010.

I am further advised that, in 2003, the MCB lodged a civil case against Mr R. L. and 37 other Defendants, including the NPF and the National Savings Fund. On 02 September 2009,

NPF and the National Savings Fund were put out of cause. The case was heard before the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court, and judgment has been reserved.

Other cases are still being investigated by ICAC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, under these circumstances, it is felt that it is not advisable at this stage, at least, to consider the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, as it might cause, first of all, prejudice to the cases before the courts and then to the ongoing investigation being carried out by ICAC.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I recall the hon. Prime Minister that, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, he has on more than one occasion demanded for the publication of the NTan report? Would he now announce to the House when the report will be published?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, the whole case is going on. As far as I remember, 'Le Mauricien' published the report. God knows how they got the report, but they published it. I should also say that, in the court case, - I am just trying to check, Mr Speaker, Sir - there have been requests for the report to be handed over from the Bank of Mauritius. I think this has been done. But, as there are court cases, I cannot go and intervene.

**Mr Speaker:** I think I will have to intervene at this stage, and inform the hon. Member that the matter is *sub judice*. Being given that the trial has taken place and a judgement is being awaited from the Supreme Court, the matter is *sub judice*. I will request the hon. Member to stop putting questions along that line. When the judgment is over, then perhaps he can come back.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do have one very important point on this issue. In view of the loopholes established by the NTan report, which cost a huge sum to the Bank of Mauritius, does the hon. Prime Minister consider the report to have significant preliminary facts to set up a full-fledged inquiry into the matter?

**Mr Speaker:** In which matter does the hon. Member mean?

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** In the matter of publishing the full report.

**Mr Speaker:** No. As I have said, the Prime Minister has answered the question. Being given that there are so many court cases now pending before the Supreme Court and inquiries are going on, the *sub judice* rule in this present case applies, and I do not think that it is proper for

the hon. Member to put the question now. He will have to wait for all the matters to be sorted out before he can come back to this House and put the question. Next question!

### **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – MEMBERS – ALLOWANCES & BENEFITS**

**(No. 1B/72) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Honourable Members of the National Assembly, he will state if consideration will be given to –

- (a) bringing amendments to the National Assembly Allowances Act with a view to reducing the allowances paid to them, and
- (b) withdrawing all duty-free benefits derived by them.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the allowances payable to Members of the National Assembly under the National Assembly Allowances Act are based on recommendations made by the PRB, which is, as we all know, an independent body. These allowances are generally linked to civil service pay bands which have been established by the PRB through job evaluation techniques, in line with current international practice. The allowances are reviewed once every five years, along with the public service pay review. However, despite such periodic reviews, the pay and benefits of hon. Members are still, I should say, much less than what would obtain in the private sector. It would not, therefore, be fair and reasonable to further reduce the pay or benefits of the hon. Members.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the House and the hon. Member that, at the beginning of the second mandate of my Government, that is, in July 2005, when the economy was going through difficult times, Members of my Government then willingly accepted a reduction of 3.5% of their allowances. And, later on, when the country was hit by the international financial crisis, their allowances were again reduced, as part of a series of measures undertaken to prepare for the economic recovery. The pay of Members of Parliament, as far as I remember, was reduced by Rs10,000; my own pay was reduced by Rs15,000, and I think the President also had his wages reduced. But this did not dampen our enthusiasm. We toiled with the same dedication, determination and patriotism. The allowances were restored in January of this year, when the economy showed clear signs of recovery.

I should also like to add that, apart from the Members of the Government, all Parliamentarians of the MSM party had also voluntarily contributed to the National Solidarity Fund, as a generous gesture in favour of the poor and the needy.

### **MBC – BOARD MEMBERS & MEETINGS**

**(No. 1B/73) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the present composition of its Board and the date of its appointment, and
- (b) the number of Board meetings held since the appointment of the present Director General, indicating the dates thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, the office of Chairperson of the MBC Board is vacant, as you know, following the demise of Mr Fareed Jangeerkhan on 12 June of this year.

The two *ex officio* Members of the Board are Mrs K. O. Fong Weng-Poorun, Permanent Secretary at my Office, and Mr J. Hurry, Director of the Government Information Service.

The four other Members are -

Mr Harold V. S. Chan Lam, OBE, CSK, GOSK;

Mrs Mariam Goodur, MSK;

Mrs Arlette Freyneau, PDSM, and

Mr Krishna A. Pather.

They were appointed on 18 November 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed by the Director General that, since his appointment in June 2009, the MBC Board has met on three occasions, namely on 09 December 2009, on 26 February 2010 and on 19 April 2010.

However, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the former Chairperson of the Corporation passed away recently - as I said, he was not well and passed away. I am informed that there were

regular consultations with the Director General on matters, which he considered requiring his views or concurrences.

I take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to present my deep condolences to the family of Mr Fareed Jangeerkhan.

**Mr Bhagwan:** We also, Mr Speaker, Sir, have known the past Chairperson who had been working for the MBC. We also associate ourselves with the Prime Minister to pay respect to his family. But, can I ask the Prime Minister whether section 9(1) of the MBC Act, where it is said that a meeting of the Board shall be held, at least, once every month, at such time and place as the Chairperson may direct, has been strictly adhered to?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, it was not strictly adhered to, but there were consultations. We are now considering whoever has to be replaced as Board Members. I am not saying all of them.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I won't go into the personal details, because I knew the Chairperson myself. We have been friends for many years; we have worked together. He was very frustrated, because the Board did not meet. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the MBC is being run as a one-man show.

**The Prime Minister:** I don't think it is a one-man show. It is a huge place. I must point out to the hon. Member that there was an inquiry that went on. We did say at the time that we should hold on everything. We want to see what the inquiry says. In fact, it was the Chairperson himself who found some irregularities - according to him - and asked for an inquiry, which I agreed to. The inquiry was done. The report was given, and this is what we were doing when I decided to call for the election. But this will be corrected.

**Mr Bhagwan:** We all know about the Hungama Affair, which has been discussed lengthily in Parliament. Is the hon. Prime Minister satisfied that everything is rosy at the MBC/TV? Because the citizens are paying Rs300 m. yearly, which is a huge sum. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the chaotic situation, as far as the management is concerned?

**Mr Speaker:** Can I refer the hon. Member that this question is about a specific issue, which has been raised about the meeting of the Board. Now, the hon. Member is drifting away

by saying that there is a chaotic situation. How can he relate his question with this particular question?

**Mr Bhagwan:** It relates, because there is no Board meeting. The Prime Minister says that there is consultation. But the fact that there is no Board meeting, it is a one-man show. The situation is chaotic at the MBC/TV, and we are paying Rs100 monthly, Sir, including you!

**The Prime Minister:** But the hon. Member has just mentioned himself that he knew the Chairperson, and that he was a person of integrity. I can tell you that he was not somebody who would agree to anything. This is why, in fact, we had the inquiry even if the Board, the Chairperson and the Director General were named by Government. Still, because he asked for an inquiry, I proceeded with the inquiry. As I said, the last meeting was in April, but this is being corrected because we are reconstituting the Board.

**Mr Bérenger:** From what the hon. Prime Minister has said, the law is clear. There must be a Board meeting every month. So, it is not a question - as the hon. Prime Minister has said - that it was not strictly adhered to. It was not adhered to. The law is being flouted. If the Chairperson was not well, there is an Acting Chairperson. Can I know who is the present Acting Chairperson?

**The Prime Minister:** No, there is no Acting Chairperson. But I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the law is also clear that, in case the Board can't meet, then, at least, there should be some consultations before things are done. This is what has happened.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a last question. Being given that the Board has not met regularly as per the Act, is the hon. Prime Minister satisfied that all decisions which had been taken by the Director General and the Management are legal? Can I know whether he is agreeable to ask the Director of Audit, in the public interest, to make an inquiry on the decisions of the Board, and see whether they are in accordance with the MBC Act?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, the last meeting of the Board was in April of this year, and they did not draw my attention to anything that was going on. I can look into it, but I have not heard about anything. Maybe, the hon. Member can give me some details.

#### **POLICE FORCE – SUICIDE CASES**

**(No. 1B/74) 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 reported cases of suicide in the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof for each of the last five years, and
- (b) the actions that are being taken to avert the recurrence thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of reported cases of suicide in the Police Force in each of the last five years is as follows -

Year	No. of Cases
2005	5
2006	2
2007	1
2008	1
2009	2
2010 (up to 17 June 2010)	Nil

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the Police Force has adopted a prevention and intervention strategy, based on medical support and organisational involvement in cases of officers suffering from stress problems and also demonstrating suicidal tendencies. In this connection, a circular has recently been issued by the Commissioner of Police to all Deputy Commissioners of Police, Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers on stress prevention and intervention strategy. This circular provides guidelines for the identification of those officers who, through their behaviour and conduct, as well as their medical records, appear to suffer from psychological problems, and are thus at risk. It also provides for close monitoring of such officers.

I am further informed that action is currently being taken for the recruitment of a psychologist in the Police Force. In the meantime, cases requiring specialised treatment and counselling are being referred by the police medical officers to psychiatrists and psychologists of Government hospitals. In simpler cases, police medical officers offer treatment and counselling themselves.

In addition, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure that police officers at senior level are properly trained to deal with such cases, Stress Awareness Prevention and Management Training Programmes are being run for all police managers. Modules on suicide prevention are also being incorporated into the police training school curriculum for all members of the Force, including new recruits. The training will encourage police officers who need counselling to come forward with problems they may have.

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, in the long run, candidates applying to join the Force will undergo a screening exercise, which will include predisposition factors such as their personality, as well as precipitating factors such as their family background, or whether they have been exposed to problems related to alcohol abuse. It is also proposed to introduce psychometric tests in the future selection exercises of trainee constables, with a view to assessing the mental state and behaviour of the candidates prior to their enlistment in the Force.

Emphasis is also being laid on the importance of extra professional activities, with a view to combating stress as well as promoting a healthy life amongst police officers. As such, Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers have been requested to provide logistical facilities for the organisation of sports and other leisure activities, including yoga and meditation sessions. A Family Support Programme is also being put into place to provide social support to the police officers and their families.

### **POLICE WELFARE ASSOCIATION - ACCOUNTS - AUDITED REPORT**

**(No. 1B/75) 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 Police Welfare Association, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) when the audited report of the accounts of the Association was submitted to him, and
- (b) whether the report has revealed irregularities and, if so, the nature thereof, indicating the measures taken to redress its financial situation.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it is not mandatory for a copy of the audited report of the accounts of the Police Welfare Association to be submitted to him, as he is only an ordinary member of the Association.

The fund of the Police Welfare Association is managed by a 17-member Committee, in accordance with the Rules of the Association. The Commissioner of Police has no authority in the management of the Association and, as such, he cannot interfere with the lawful business of that Association.

I am also informed that, following several complaints and allegations made to the Commissioner of Police, the latter referred the matter to the Registrar of Associations for enquiry, pursuant to section 32 of the Registration of Associations Act. As the complaints and the allegations might also disclose criminal offences, the matter was referred to the Central CID for enquiry.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, following a request dated 15 June 2010 from the newly-elected Secretary of the Police Welfare Association, the Commissioner of Police has requested the Director of the Office of Public Sector Governance (formerly what used to be the Management Audit Bureau) to carry out an internal audit and verification of -

- (a) all accounting records and systems;
- (b) the processing and granting of loans;
- (c) the reconciliation of accounts, payments and deductions;
- (d) the verification of minutes of proceedings, and
- (e) the bank statements and financial statements.

Appropriate remedial action will be taken in the light of the report of the Director, Office of Public Sector Governance.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is true that the Commissioner of Police is just a member, but, at the end of the day, he is the one who delegates the office bearers; he has to give them leave to manage the Association. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Commissioner of Police has, at least, been made aware of the report and the discrepancies which the internal auditor has found in the accounts?

**The Prime Minister:** Obviously, as he said, he has had several complaints and allegations, following which he decided to have this inquiry.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Is it a fact that we are talking about millions of rupees which have been siphoned or given to officers without any authority whatsoever?

**The Prime Minister:** We can't say at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir. Obviously, there is an inquiry; let's wait for the inquiry to finish.

**Mr Baloomoody:** We know that the dossier has been submitted to the Central CID, and we know that most of the office bearers are senior officers of the police. Does the hon. Prime Minister find it proper for the police officer to inquire into the acts and doings of even some of the superiors who have managed that fund?

**The Prime Minister:** That is why we said we want to change the system. We had an election; we are going to do it. But, in the meantime, somebody has to inquire; we can't just leave it as it is.

### **PRISONERS - MOBILE PHONES - INQUIRY**

**(No. 1B/76) 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 prisoners who have been found to be in possession of mobile phones and private phone numbers of police officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to whether an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof, indicating if any action has been taken against those responsible.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 13 January 2010, the Prisons authorities secured three mobile phones from the Segregation and Protection Unit, where detainee S. C. was found along with eight other detainees.

These mobile phones were handed over to the Major Crime Investigation Team for investigation. After obtaining a Judge's Order, the MCIT enquired into the communications made through these mobile phones. The enquiry revealed that detainee S. C. had communicated with three police officers.

These officers were interviewed by the MCIT. They all agreed that they had conversed with S. C. on their mobile phones, and they also explained the circumstances of the phone communication.

There is a police enquiry which is ongoing, which is also looking into the circumstances under which the detainees in the Segregation and Protection Unit, which is a highly protected area, had access to mobile phones.

Once the enquiry is completed, the matter will be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know whether the hon. Prime Minister is aware that this has been ongoing for quite a while? It is common knowledge that mobile phones, drugs are available in the prisons. What serious action is going to be taken, being given that it is now established that drug traffickers - at least one - operate from inside the prisons with mobile phones for their drug trafficking business outside the prisons?

**The Prime Minister:** This is not new, Mr Speaker, Sir. I must say it is not just when we came in Government. This has been ongoing and, in fact, we are taking action. And what happens when you have a proper person to take action? Those who are 'cooperating' with the prisoners are the ones who go and see the unions, and then there are strikes. All this will be over very soon. I have told the Commissioner of Prisons that he will have to act; those who have to be removed will be removed, and those who have to be prosecuted will be prosecuted.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Has the attention of the Prime Minister been drawn to the fact that these cellular phones or other things are found at places where people go to pray within the prisons?

**The Prime Minister:** That is why I always say that it does not mean that those who go to church are gods or saints. We can see that they are putting mobile phones in religious places. But I will look into that.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this question was raised in the House some time back. Would the Prime Minister envisage the possibility of having CCTV cameras or setting jamming devices in the prisons, so that nobody can use a mobile phone even if he is in possession of one?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, if the hon. Member remembers, I did mention that we are putting CCTV in the prisons as well.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Beau Bassin prison is found in my constituency, and so that is why I am interested. There is a *laisser-aller* even at the gate of the prison. Can the Prime Minister look into the possibility - I am very serious, because the Beau Bassin prison is found in my constituency, and I have been in that constituency for a long time - of putting some sort of modern electronic apparatus - we all know about phone taping; this is another debate; *tout nous téléphone écouté mem sa*; even for Ministers - so that even when people try to phone within the prison, these calls do not go outside?

**The Prime Minister:** There are three things. First of all, what the hon. Member is saying is not true. We do not need to tap phones in Mauritius, because we have such big mouths that we can hear whatever is said.

*(Interruptions)*

Whoever! Mauritians are like this! They speak all the time; they can't keep their mouth shut. I know what is happening there now. I do not have a taping system there, because they all open their mouth and speak more than they should be speaking. They do not know when to shut their mouth. That is what happens.

*(Interruptions)*

Anyway, I also get the same problem, and that is why I never say anything. That is why nobody knew that I was going to call there. I never say anything; it is all in my head and it is going to stay in my head. I see big articles in the papers. I saw an article the other day, and one ambassador rang me saying: 'I saw my photograph!' I said: 'You saw your photograph? I never read the paper. Why do you believe the papers? Wait to see what happens!'

The hon. Member was talking about the gates, and I agree with him. We have looked into that. There is a problem. If everybody did their work properly and conscientiously, as they are being paid and getting money for that, we would not have this problem. But, there are so many

people who do not have a conscience. And if they want to make quick money, they will end up quickly in jail very soon, because we are amending the laws. Especially if you are a police officer or a prisons officer, you have to take your responsibility when you are acting. What we are doing is to have a triple gate system, and we are ensuring, as far as possible - because at the end of the day, we depend on people, as the gates will not open by themselves - to improve the gate system itself whenever there is a gate lodge. I think they are having detectors, things to listen to. If there are people saying things there, there will be some form of detectors.

With regard to the jamming system, there has been one, which I think was put up during the hon. Member's time, if I am not mistaken, and which was a good thing. It was installed at the prison, but it had a spillage effect, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was affecting people outside the prison. I do not know whether the hon. Member falls in that category, but he probably could not use his phone. The intensity of the jamming system had to be decreased. They are looking at ways of improving the jamming system at the moment.

#### ***REZISTANS EK ALTERNATIV CASE - CONSTITUTION – AMENDMENT***

**(No. 1B/77) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in the light of the submission by Government to the United Nations Human Rights Committee in the *Rezistans ek Alternativ* case to the effect that the general population be termed residual community, he will consider amending the Constitution to redefine the term general population.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated previously in the House, I am sympathetic to the proposal of the replacement of the term “General Population” in our Constitution by a more appropriate term.

However, as already announced in the Government Programme of 2010-2015, Government will engage in a process of constitutional review and will appoint a team of constitutional experts which will, amongst other things, consider appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system. Any relevant amendment to the Constitution will be considered in the light of the recommendations of the experts and the stakeholders whom we will talk to.

I would nevertheless like to point out that the Government, in its submission to the Human Rights Committee, has not, in any way, suggested that the term “General Population” be replaced by “residual community”. The hon. Member seems to suggest that this is what the Government has done. This is not the case. Government only gave its interpretation of paragraph 3(4) of the First Schedule of the Constitution to the effect that the General Population community was meant to be a residual category, comprising those who neither are Hindus or Muslims, or Sino-Mauritians.

I would also like to inform the hon. Member that the term “residual category”, in relation to the General Population, was not coined by Government. In fact, it was used in the judgement delivered in the year 2000 in the case of Carrimkhan vs Lew Chin and Ors, in which Justice Seetulsingh, as he was then, made the following observation, and I quote -

“Although some may hold the view that the members of the General Population are Christians, nowhere is this mentioned. Thus, the General Population means that all the inhabitants of Mauritius who are not Hindus, Muslims or Sino-Mauritians fall into that category. Paragraph 3(4) of the First Schedule is very clear in this respect. The General Population is what some may call a residual group, which is considered to be a community for the allocation of the best loser system seats.”

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in its submission, the Government’s contention is that *Rezistans ek Alternativ* is not challenging the best loser system, but the fact that somebody who refuses to declare his community cannot stand as a candidate?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not sure what is argued in the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will have to look into this, and see exactly what was said in that respect.

**Mr Bérenger:** Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me - I am sure he will - that this malaise around the term “General Population”, the way certain communities are reacting to the results of the last elections, make it all the more urgent that we go through the process of adopting a good electoral reform as soon as possible?

**The Prime Minister:** We just had the results of a new election, and I do not want to go into another election immediately with an electoral reform. But I am taking the commitment, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the past, there were difficulties. The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows

himself. When he was Prime Minister and was allied with the MSM, they did not manage to agree, although they had a very good report by Sachs and there were two committees. We also have some difficulties. But, I will certainly try to move this agenda forward.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the use of the term “residual community” hinders the nation building process of our country, and could be the cause of humiliation to a section of our population?

**The Prime Minister:** As far as I remember, even Père Grégoire said that he does not like the term “General Population”, because it is as if when you are not a Muslim, a Hindu or a Sino-Mauritian, you are dumped into that basket. He said that in front of me. I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there. So, I agree.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions 1B/82, 1B/83 will be replied Dr. the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands and Parliamentary Questions 1B/131 will be replied by hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. Hon. Bhagwan!

#### **CALODYNE – HOTEL PROJECT - EIA LICENCE**

**(No. 1B/80) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the hotel project by Global Prism Ltd at Butte à l’herbe, Calodyne, he will state –

- (a) when the application for the Environment Impact Assessment Licence was made, indicating the date
  - (i) when the application was considered by the Environment Impact Assessment Licence Committee;
  - (ii) of the approval by the Minister, and
  - (iii) issue of the licence,
- (b) whether the project is situated in environmentally sensitive areas and, if so, state whether all procedures in relation to Planning Policy Guidelines have been followed, and
- (c) whether any objection has been filed against the project.

**Mr Virahsawmy:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the application for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) licence for the proposed hotel project by Globe Prism Co. Ltd was made on 18 August 2009. The application was examined by the EIA committee on 16 April 2010, and the project was recommended subject to set of conditions. The grant of the EIA licence was approved by the Minister on 20 April 2010. The EIA licence was issued on 20 April 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be inappropriate for me to reply to part (b) of this question, as the matter is *sub judice*, because three appeals have been lodged against the issue of the EIA licence in respect of the project concerned at the Environment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) on 19 May 2010. In fact, these cases have been fixed *pro forma* for today.

With respect to part (c), yes, as I already mentioned, three appeals have been filed at the Environment Appeal Tribunal.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister who is chairing the Appeal Tribunal these days?

**Mr Virahsawmy:** It is the Senior Magistrate, Mr Kam Sing.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, in the process of proceeding with the EIA application, the views of all the authorities have been sought?

**Mr Virahsawmy:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question! Hon Bhagwan!

### **INFINITY TOWER – ACQUISITION - SIC**

**(No. 1B/81) 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 building, Infinity Tower, at Ebène, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to-

- (a) the reasons for its acquisition by the Corporation, indicating when the decision was taken and by whom;
- (b) state the total amount to be disbursed by the Corporation, and
- (c) whether any prior evaluation of the building has been carried out and, if so, by whom, indicating the estimated value thereof.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my answers pertaining to this PQ are statements of facts, as per documents that have been related to the operations carried out under the Mechanism for Transitional Support (MTSP).

I am informed that the process of requesting financial help from MTSP under the stimulus package is as follows -

- (a) a company in financial difficulties contacts its main banker, and they jointly come up with a rescue plan;
- (b) MTSP then appoints an Independent Financial Adviser (IFA) to perform a review of the rescue plan of the Company and submits its report to the MTSP committee, based on a burden sharing of all stakeholders, and
- (c) then, a Term Sheet, embodying all the terms and conditions, is submitted by the IFA to all parties concerned for consideration and approval.

Infinity BPO Ltd has been facing difficulties to finance its activities since June 2009. The main reason that was put forward by the company to explain its financial situation at that time was cash flow problems, given the inability of its clients to effect payments at scheduled periods, due to the economic crisis prevailing in its main market, that is, Europe. Consequently, the Company was experiencing difficulties to meet its commitments as regards its debts and loans. Thus, it applied for financial assistance under stimulus package on 17 September 2009.

BDO DCDM was appointed as IFA to perform a feasibility report on Infinity BPO Ltd. Based on the IFA report, the MTSP and the other parties approved and signed the first Term Sheet. This enabled the Company to maintain 650 jobs and pursue its activities.

The first Term Sheet for an amount of Rs102 m. was signed on 28 November 2009. Based on the principle of burden sharing, the amount of Rs102 m. was allocated as follows -

The applicant, i.e – Infinity BPO Ltd:

- to inject a total amount of Rs12 m. by 30 June 2010;
- Rs12m. for the bank, which is the Barclays Bank Plc;
- to finance Rs45 m.;

- to issue debentures of Rs45 m. in River Heights Ltd (at *pari passu* with Barclays Bank Plc), which is the owner of Infinity Tower.

Moreover, key conditions agreed with Infinity BPO Ltd included the following -

- (a) Rs1 m. per month cut in management costs;
- (b) two cars to be returned to the leasing companies;
- (c) appointment of an independent financial manager to take care of all financial matters including validation of all expenses and joint signatory power with the CEO;
- (d) relinquishing power of the CEO to make sole decisions on financial matters, and
- (e) appointment by MTSP of a project manager to ensure timely completion of the Infinity Tower.

All these conditions have been fulfilled by Infinity BPO Ltd.

I must point out for the information of the House that Infinity BPO Ltd undertook to phase its injecting of Rs12 m. over time, as per the terms of the First Term Sheet. As at date, only Rs3 m. has been injected.

The initial support to Infinity BPO Ltd was meant to being used as follows -

- (a) completion of the Infinity Tower;
- (b) settlement of certain unsecured creditors including BPML, and
- (c) working capital requirements.

Despite having received funds under the first Term Sheet, Infinity BPO Ltd continued to experience difficulties due to the protracted crisis in Europe and the inability of its debtors to honour their commitments on time. What was believed to be a 'temporary' cash flow problem turned out to be a much more serious situation that threatened the core business of the company, due to persistent payment defaults from its debtors. Moreover, simultaneously both secured and unsecured creditors manifested their intention to put the company into liquidation. The IFA then submitted a second report, highlighting clearly that there was only one option remaining for the company to continue as a going concern and to prevent any lay off of its staff. The IFA recommended the sale and lease back of the Infinity Tower to the National Real Estate Ltd

(NREL). NREL, which is 100% Government owned company, was created, in fact, under the stimulus package to assist firms facing financial difficulties, with a view of sale and lease back of assets.

The Chief Government Valuer was appointed to value the Infinity Tower, that is, the land and building. The land and building were valued at Rs340 m. in a valuation report dated 05 March 2010.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed as follows -

The second Term Sheet was signed on 01 April 2010 under the following conditions -

- (a) the purchase of Infinity Tower is subject to a buy back option over a period of three years by River Heights Ltd or earlier as from the date of purchase, based on a value that guarantees National Real Estate Ltd a 5% capital growth annually from the date of acquisition to the date of disposal, and
- (b) sales proceeds will go towards total repayments of secured debts and partial repayments of unsecured debts of River Heights Limited and Infinity BPO Limited respectively.

Under the agreement, NREL has secured advanced rent equivalent to around 20 months from Infinity BPO Ltd.

The implementing agency, NREL, made the following disbursements -

Purchase of Infinity Tower	Rs340,000,000
Notary fees	Rs 986,700
Registration Duty	Rs 17,000,000
Land Transfer Tax	Rs 17,000,000
Total amount	Rs 374,986,700

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the evaluation was done by the No. 1, that is, the Government Valuer and, if not, by whom? And, in any case, is the hon. Minister prepared to lay a copy of that evaluation report in the Library?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I do not have the name of the Government Valuer who did that exercise, but of course, I undertake to provide that information to the House. I do not see any problem in tabling the evaluation report to the House.

**Mr Bhagwan:** We all denounce the saga *entourant cette affaire de* Infinity Tower. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this Infinity Tower or whatever company is still owned by Mr Jean Suzanne, who is still official adviser at the Prime Minister's Office?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I know that Mr Jean Suzanne is a shareholder of the Infinity BPO Ltd. I do not know about the other shareholders, Mr Speaker, Sir. Of course, given a specific question, I will be able to provide this information to the House. As far as his capacity as adviser is concerned, I would not know. The question must be addressed to the hon. Prime Minister.

**Mr Bhagwan:** *'Mo espérer ine ramasse tous sa bane Aston Martin, montres tout !'* Has any survey been done? Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Government has secured the amount due by that gentleman to the DBM, BPML, CEB - all the debts owed to the State?

**Mr Jugnauth:** As I have said, part of the money that has been given has been used to pay the debtors. I do not know whether it's all the debtors. But, again, I can provide this information to the House.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Could the Minister, after survey has been done on the amount due by that person to all the companies, be it Government owned companies, parastatal, lay the information in the Library? Can I know from the hon. Minister whether any survey has been done by the Government Valuer concerning the price per square feet paid for that unfinished building?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I just said that the Government Valuer has valued this building and has given his report. I have no problem in tabling the report to the House. I do not see why we should not.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Has the decision of buying this Tower been approved by the parent Ministry?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, it is co-chaired - from memory, I know there is a member of the private sector - and there is somebody from the Ministry of Finance. The MTSP has looked at

the report that has been submitted by the IFA and, as I have just said in my reply, has come up with a number of conditions attached to the buying of this property.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Would the hon. Minister be agreeable to ask the Director of Audit or any independent auditor to have an inquiry into all the transactions made? Is the hon. Minister agreeable to lay, on the table of the Assembly, the Minutes of the Board Meeting of the day on which that decision was taken?

**Mr Jugnauth:** *M. le président, s'il y a maldonne, bien sûr on va enquêter là-dessus.* If the hon. Member is aware of anything that he thinks is suspicious, I am willing to take that information and have a look at it.

**Mr Bérenger:** I think the Minister should know that we are talking about more than Rs300 m. Was that evaluation done by the Government Valuer - the No. 1 - or by some Government Valuer?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I have just said in my reply that I do not have the name. The name will tell us whether it is the number one or not. But I can check and I will, of course, provide this information to the House.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the learned Minister has stated that Infinity had reached the original terms of disbursement by putting only Rs3 m. instead of Rs12 m. Would he not agree that, instead of putting people's good money after bad money and risking the same fate as R. S. Denim, it would be wiser to put the company into receivership and allow the market to take over the company?

**Mr Jugnauth:** No. Actually, the commitment that was taken was for Infinity BPO to inject Rs12 m. over time. But, unfortunately, they had just been able to furnish Rs3 m. That is the situation. Now, whether, it is a question of throwing good money after bad money, the MTSP has done its work on the basis of the IFA. I do not see the reason why we should not, because he has satisfied all the criteria. This is what I am told.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Chief Executive Officer, Special Adviser to the hon. Prime Minister, flew to South Africa - according to my information - on a special chartered jet?

*(Interruptions)*

Your special adviser! He has travelled to South Africa. Tell us when he stopped. We are entitled to know, because of all this generosity! Is he aware that, supposedly, he fell ill and flew to South Africa - I know the real reason - on a specially chartered plane - according to my information? Can the hon. Minister tell us whether the bill was paid for by Infinity?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I am not aware whether he has flown to South Africa in a specially chartered jet and, of course, I will look into that matter.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, at that particular Board meeting of that company, where the decision was taken to purchase that unfinished building, any directives coming from the representative of Government was given to the Chairperson to go along with the purchase of that unfinished building?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I am not aware of any directives, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister look into the Minutes and inform the House accordingly?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, of course, I take this matter seriously. Now that some information have been provided by hon. Members of the Opposition, I will definitely look into those matters.

**Mr Speaker:** I will suspend for one and a half hours.

*At 12.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.30 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

### **LES SALINES – NEOTOWN PROJECT**

(No. 1B/82) **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 Neotown Project at Les Salines, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to –

- (a) the names of the promoters;
- (b) the details of the project, indicating -
  - (i) the estimated amount of inflow of Foreign Direct Investment;

- (ii) whether any deposit has been made and, if so, state the amount thereof, and when payment has been effected;
- (c) whether any proof of payment has been submitted to the Board, and
- (d) state when works are expected to start.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

“Neotown” is the appellation given to the Waterfront Development Project at Les Salines by its promoter.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the promoter of this project is the “Les Salines Development Limited”, a company duly registered in Mauritius since March 2008 under the Companies Act 2001. This company is wholly owned by Patel Engineering Limited of Mumbai, India, which has engaged in infrastructure development and construction since 1969. The company, which is ranked among the top 5 in the construction sector in India, has a wide portfolio of activities, including areas such as power sector and irrigation, and real estate construction spread over Asia, Europe, America and Africa.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, the project mainly will comprise hotels, commercial outlets, residential complexes, office buildings, a luxury condominium complex, marine gardens, leisure parks and tourist attractions. The Foreign Direct Investment for this project is estimated to be Rs16 billion.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, the company has effected the following payments to Government, that is, the Ministry of Housing and Lands -

- Rs8,749,500 deposited as reservation fee on 06 April 2009
- Rs117,660 as survey fee on 07 May 2009
- Rs25 m. as advance rent at time of signature of lease agreement on 11 December 2009
- Rs1,205,340 as registration duty on 11 December 2009

In regard to part (c) of the question, cheques/receipts prove that these payments have been effected as follows -

- Sir William Newton Street, Port Louis, Barclays Bank Cheque No. 0000002018659, drawn to Government by Les Salines Development Limited on 06 April 2009, for the amount of Rs8,749,500 as deposit required as reservation fee;
- receipt No. 2008020002, for the amount of Rs117,660, for the survey fee issued by Government to the company on 07 May 2009;
- receipt No. 2009016519, for the amount of Rs25 m., for advance rent, issued by Government to the company on 11 December 2009;
- receipt No. 2009016520, for the amount of Rs1,205,340, issued by Government to the company on 11 December 2009

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am advised that the company has already started works, including work of site development since 13 March 2010, and following the preparation of preliminary plans, it has submitted, as required, and for scrutiny, the Master Plan of its project to the Planning Division of my Ministry on 17 May 2010. I am advised that its Master Plan is in line with the guidelines of Les Salines Master Plan prepared by Messrs Stauch Vorster Architects, commissioned in December 2002 by the Mauritius Ports Authority, and which submitted its report in 2004.

Once the Master Plan has been approved, the company is expected to accelerate the implementation of its Waterfront Development Project in three phases over a period of some five years. And I have absolutely no doubt that this company, owned by a Group, which is internationally known, reputed, and respected, will implement its Waterfront Development Project as fast as it can, within the set time frame.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I know from the hon. Minister the extent of land which has either been leased to the company by Government or Mauritius Ports Authority and whether same has been approved by the Board of the MPA or Government.

**Dr. Kasenally:** The extent of the land is 25 hectares, that is, about 58 *arpents*. This land is reclaimed land in the port area belonging to the MPA, and in February 2008 Government

approved the leasing of the land by the MPA to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, for eventual sublease to Les Salines Development for a period of 99 years.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Is the 99-year lease a new policy of Government or has this policy been approved by Government for that specific company?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a mega project with a lot of implications for the future development of the city of Port Louis. I think Government took the decision with the Mauritius Ports Authority, together with the Minister of Housing and Lands, to extend it exceptionally to 99 years.

**Mr Bhagwan:** May I know from the hon. Minister who negotiated with Government on behalf of Patel Engineering? Or is it Mr Bell, who is a sort of *courtier* for the project, who has discussed with Government? That person has met Ministers other than the Minister of Housing and Lands in the course of discussions for Government's approval with regard to the allocation of land.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have never met Mr Bell. I have not seen him. I don't know his shape or size, and most certainly he was not the one. The top team of Les Salines Development, represented by its Chief Executive and other members of the Administration, negotiated directly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The hon. Minister has stated that work has started. Is it site works? Has Government received an indication from that promoter? Have firm commitments been obtained by prospective investors to come and invest in this project? Is he aware that this company is having dealings with other people for sublease?

**Dr. Kasenally:** We have got a firm commitment from this company to develop it on the lines of the Master Plan. Obviously, this company is a well-known company, which has its records all over the world, and we have good reason to believe that it will bring it to fruition. This is a one-off opportunity which this country has got to develop Port Louis.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Has any deadline been given to the promoter in terms of implementation of project on a phased basis?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Yes, the project would be in various phases and would comprise *inter alia* a hotel, casino, night clubs, gaming centres, broad walks, marine gardens, tourist heritage centre, and a luxury condominium complex, as I mentioned earlier, with a boutique hotel.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, it is the property of the Mauritius Ports Authority, which has leased it to Government, which has subleased it to the promoter. Can I know the duration of the sublease and whether that sublease allows the promoter to sublease to others and, if yes, what control Government keeps?

**Dr. Kasenally:** As far as this land is concerned, it has been subleased to Patel Engineering Limited, and we are going to monitor and master the project. Although there may be other people coming in, the lease would be to Patel Engineering Limited, as far as I know.

**Mr Bérenger:** Are they allowed to sublease? For how long has that lease been given to the promoter? Is it for 99 years?

**Dr. Kasenally:** The 99-year lease is to Patel Engineering Limited. There is no indication that they are going to sublease it and to whom. Whatever subleasing is going to be done will be with the consent of Government, and Government alone will decide on the lease.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House the date final approval was given to the promoter?

**Dr. Kasenally:** The lease was signed in December 2009.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is confirming now that we have departed from the normal lease, whereby we have included subleasing for the first time in a lease agreement signed between Government and a third party. May we know why, in this particular case, we have departed from the normal lease agreement?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a one-off project, a mega project which may never be coming to this country again. This is why Government decided, in an exceptional case, to do that. There is no departing in policy. We have to take things as they come, and these are opportunities which we have to grab. Otherwise, there would have been no development.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The hon. Minister has just mentioned the mega project - I am not pointing fingers at the Minister. We have seen mega projects turning into mega scandals. We have had

the opportunity to discuss, ask questions and see by ourselves. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Government of Mauritius has already earmarked space in that project?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Speaking about mega scandals, the hon. Member can rest assured that there is going to be no mega scandal, however his wishful thinking might be. I think he should not be that negative. This Government has just been elected with a clear mandate, and we have been asking for transparencies. We can assure the hon. Member that this Government will ensure that there is no mega scandal. I don't know of what mega scandal the hon. Member is talking about, but...

*(Interruptions)*

I have said that Mr Bell or Mr Bellbell is not here. I don't know him. I have said that I don't know his size, shape or colour. I don't know why this Mr Bell is being thrown down my throat.

*(Interruptions)*

This project would be monitored very closely by Government and by my Ministry.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I asked whether Government has earmarked space in that complex or in that project. Am I wrong or am I right?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Government has not earmarked space especially for that, but as the project goes on and if there is a need for it...

*(Interruptions)*

There will be no Infinity.

Excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If there is a need for it, we shall look into it. In other words, when we come to the bridge we will cross it.

**Mr Baloomoody:** In view of this mega project and the special lease agreement which has been tailor-made for this project, is the hon. Minister prepared to lay on the Table of the Assembly a copy of that lease agreement between Government and the promoter?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if there is no legal impediment, I see no reason why we should not do that. But, first of all, we must see how the clauses are before I can pronounce on that.

**Mr Lesjongard:** In a normal lease agreement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that we have a standard period of implementation. May we know what will be the implementation period for this mega project?

**Dr. Kasenally:** The implementation schedule is in the lease agreement and will be maintained. We have to stick to that implementation schedule. Obviously, when you're doing a mega project, some of the projects may come beforehand; some will come a bit late. We need to have a bit of flexibility, but the rule of the game is that it has to be implemented according to schedule.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Have discussions been held with the promoters? This project is situated in Les Salines, in the region of Port Louis, as part of a corporate social responsibility, as the Government has been talking about. We all know that, for hotels, a specific amount is always kept for the surroundings. Have discussions taken place with the promoters for the necessary funds to be made available to the local authority of the region, in terms of social responsibility of the company, for the people of Les Salines?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Obviously, this project is in its infancy, but I know for sure that this company will live up to its commitment for social responsibility and Mauritius, especially the surroundings in Port Louis and the deprived areas of Port Louis, will benefit fully. This Government, the Prime Minister and myself will ensure that Port Louis benefit from it, especially the regions of Roche Bois, Pointe aux Sables, and even Vallée Pitôt and Plaine Verte.

#### **JIN-FEI PROJECT - LAND LEASE**

**(No. 1B/83) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Jin-Fei Project, he will state –

- (a) the extent of land leased, indicating the conditions of the lease, and
- (b) whether all the former lessees have been compensated and, if not, why not.

**The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

The extent of land leased to Jin Fei for the proposed Trade and Cooperation Zone is 500 *arpents*, and the conditions of the lease are as follows –

Period of lease: 99 years, as from August 2009;

Purpose: Development of an Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone;

Rental: Rs8,645,100 per annum for the first five years, with regular increases to reflect the anticipated increase in market value of the land.

In year 2054, the rental will be more than Rs38 m. per annum and will reach Rs129 m. per annum in the year 2099.

Other conditions are usual conditions normally provided in the industrial site leases.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the former agricultural lessees at Riche Terre. I am informed by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security that, as at to date, out of the 120 former lessees, 92 have collected their cash compensation.

In respect of the remaining ones, the recommendations made in the Noël/Ramkissoon Report are being looked into by my colleague, the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there was any interest from any other countries?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has never been any interest from any other countries. In fact, we are particularly privileged for this again yet mega project, which has led to a 99-year lease. This mega project has been made possible thanks to the very special relationship which this country and the hon. Prime Minister has had with the President of the Republic of China and, following his visit, Mauritius has been preferred to other African countries which have been trying to bid for this sort of mega project.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** I am given to understand that the project was initially Tianli. And then, in the course of events, the project turned to be Jin Fei. Given that this is a matter of public interest, can the hon. Minister table the lease agreement with Tianli and Jin Fei?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Jin-Fei and Tianli are both Government owned companies in the Republic of China. It is because the project has evolved to such a stature that Jin Fei, which is a much larger company, with much more responsibility in the Chinese industry, has taken over, with the blessing of both Government and the Republic of China. As far as

tabling the lease agreement is concerned, I reiterate that if there is no legal impediment to doing so, we will do that.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I am not mistaken, the lease agreement with Tianli was for 60 years. Now, we hear that the lease agreement with Jin Fei is for 99 years, if I heard the Minister correctly. Is that correct? Was that change, from 60 years to 99 years, done at the request of Jin Fei?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this was changed after discussions with the company, and we brought it in line with what was obtainable at that time.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House how many jobs will be created in total, and when? I would also like to know what measures are being taken to the effect that many of our citizens will lose jobs.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question is a bit ambiguous, but I shall answer it. As far as how many jobs will be lost, I think it is very difficult to forecast on that. In fact, the net increase in jobs will far outweigh what we have lost. I am told that about 35,000+ jobs will be created.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any outstanding payment left with regard to the transfer of lease from Tianli to Jin Fei?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I have to look into it, but I am pretty sure that no outstanding payment is left. I'll check and have the information available.

**Mr Baloomoody:** I have one supplementary on part (b) with regard to the question on compensation. The hon. Minister replied that the 92 ex-lessees have been compensated and the rest are being considered following the Noël/Ramkissoon Report. May we know whether any offer has been made subsequently, following the publication of the Noël/Ramkissoon Report, and, if so, what is the quantum that has been offered to the rest of them?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this matter - as I have said - is being looked after by the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, and if a proper question is put to my colleague, the Minister, he would be able to enlighten the house better.

**ST PIERRE – SHUTTLE SERVICE**

**(No. 1B/84) 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 proposed provision for a shuttle service from St. Pierre Traffic Centre to l'Agrément St. Pierre, Ste Catherine, Circonstance St. Pierre and back to St. Pierre Traffic Centre, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that the road network within Cité Ste Catherine is narrow and, therefore, not convenient for large buses.

However, a road test was carried out recently, and it was observed that a minibus of dimensions 2.5m by 7.5m may be introduced in the region, provided that the road sides and corners are cleared.

The National Transport Authority is examining the introduction of a bus service by 25 seater minibuses between Moka and St Pierre Traffic Centre, and which pass through Petit Verger Branch Road, Cité Ste Catherine and Residence Vignol.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he can give a time frame within which all the needful will be done and the bus services will be made operational?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of opinion that, within a few months, it will be done, because we have, first of all, to enlarge the road a little bit, and then we have to invite applications. That will take no less than three months.

**Mr Dayal:** Can I also ask the hon. Minister whether it is envisaged to extend the road till Moka?

**Mr Bachoo:** I am not in a position to answer it right now, but I can assure the hon. Member that the needful will be done.

#### **BOMBAY ROAD, PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - HUMP**

**(No. 1B/85) 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 levelling of the blind hump near Bombay Road, Providence, Quartier Militaire, he will state if there is any delay in the execution of the works and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the works order for the sum of Rs3.05 m. has been issued to the district contractor on 02 October 2009.

Authorisation has been requested from the adjacent land owner, i.e. FUEL for the laying of the water pipes and underground telephone cables. This authorisation is still awaited. The works will be done as soon as the necessary way leave is obtained.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have followed the answer given by the hon. Minister attentively. In fact, works order was issued on 02 October and was supposed to be over by 30 November. Till to date, I think the necessary permission has not been obtained by the relevant authorities. Therefore, I should like to impress upon the hon. Minister to speed up matters, because the situation is really chaotic and accident-prone.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, legally it is not within my responsibility, but we have already sent a reminder to FUEL. And then, I will try to see if I can call those responsible in office and try to persuade them to return it. Or else, if they fail to do so, then we have to move for acquisition of that plot of land.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the pavement and drain from there can be extended towards the community centre of Providence?

**Mr Bachoo:** It forms part of the project.

### **QUARTIER MILITAIRE – BUS SERVICE**

(No. 1B/86) **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 bus services in the region of Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire, Camp Thorel and La Laura/Malinga, he will state if he is aware of the irregularity thereof and, if so -

- (a) indicate the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NTA that the localities of Vuillemin, Quartier Militaire, Camp Thorel and La Laura/Malinga are served by individual operators.

Releases vary between 10-25 minutes during peak hours, and 30-40 minutes between off-peak hours.

However, I have been made aware of certain irregularities in service delivery. Complaints are regularly received in connection with non-observance of timetable. According to the NTA, operators who wish to maximize revenue, forego trips during off-peak hours. They also fail to perform late trips with a view to reaching home early. They are sometimes held up in traffic congestion, especially during peak hours, and thus fail to observe the timetable. In addition, my attention has been drawn to the fact that individual bus operators fail to pick up students and old aged persons at bus stops, and behave uncivilly towards them as they benefit from free travel scheme. 222 cases of disciplinary actions have been taken against defaulting bus operators during period January 2008 to date.

In this context, the NTA carries out regular checks on its own and on receipt of complaints, during peak and off-peak hours, to ensure that buses comply with current policy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have requested the NTA to be more vigilant, and to take severe actions against recurrent defaulters. I am chairing a meeting regularly with inspectors of the NTA to monitor the situation islandwide.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the operators act according to their whims and caprices, and this question has been raised many times. For example, from Camp Thorel via Vuillemin to Curepipe, I think no bus is operating actually, though this line is very much alive. Then, there is Camp Thorel to Flacq and Camp Thorel to Rose Hill, and also from La Laura where services are irregular. It means that the transport service is very erratic, chaotic and irregular. I would like to impress upon the hon. Minister to see to it that the matter be taken up seriously and sped up.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are taking the matter seriously. Government is really seriously about it, and we are trying to review the whole system. I can assure the hon. Member that we are taking action against those defaulters, and we are not going to delay in bringing forward additional measures in order to cope with the situation.

**Mr Dayal:** Justice delayed is justice denied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

#### **CAMP THOREL - ADSL FACILITIES**

(No. 1B/87) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to internet and ADSL facilities in the region of Camp Thorel, he will state if he is aware that the inhabitants thereat are being deprived thereof and, if so, will he state the remedial measures, if any, taken to address the issue.

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom Ltd that it is providing telecommunication services to 431 residential and four business customers in the Camp Thorel area. 54 of these customers are provided with broadband services (which include ADSL services). As at date, there are 14 candidates waiting for broadband service in that area.

Besides, I am informed by Emtel Ltd also that it provides internet facilities through its 2G and 3G networks. Being given that there is a 2G/3G cell site in Camp Thorel, the inhabitants should be able to use the Emtel mobile broadband service in the region, and thus enjoy the required facilities.

Still, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the situation will improve considerably by the end of this month when Mauritius Telecom Ltd will, with a view to providing improved broadband services throughout the island, upgrade the services in Camp Thorel area with the introduction of Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) Technology by the end of June 2010.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants and the students there use to complain to me almost regularly. I have got many representations, as well as my colleagues. I should like to impress upon the hon. Minister to look into the matter. At times, we get answers from the officers, but in real terms and practice it is not so.

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** I would like to inform my hon. friend that, by the end of June, the needful will be done.

#### **RICHE TERRE HIGHWAY - ROUNDABOUT**

(No. 1B/88) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the roundabout presently under construction on the highway at Riche Terre,

he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to -

- (a) whether it meets the established international norms, and
- (b) whether any modification to the original layouts is being envisaged and, if so, the costs thereof.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of the roundabout presently under construction on the highway at Riche Terre, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the roundabout complies with the same standard as the Federal Highway Administration of the US Department of Transportation. I am submitting two documents, namely the codes for the construction of roundabouts as in USA and that of UK. These are international standards. When Jin Fei had submitted its project, it had proposed the roundabout. An extract of the Master Plan is being submitted as well. The geometric design of Jin Fei roundabout conforms to international codes of practice.

For roundabouts, minor fine-tuning in order to adapt to site constraints should, however, be expected during the setting out exercise. No increase in the original contract value is expected.

To assure the House, I am submitting a report on the roundabout by the Road Development Authority, a second report by Dr. Reesaul, Principal Traffic Engineer attached to the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, and a third report on the same issue by the consultant Luxconsult Ltd. All the three reports conclude positively on the standard and safety of the roundabout at Riche Terre.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm, as per the report that he has mentioned, that 500 metres from the two roundabouts is within international norms?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am talking about the construction of a roundabout. We have observed the international norms. It is a fact that we have got 500 metres on both sides. But the hon. Member should not forget that, with the development of Jin Fei, the traffic will be so dense that we did not have any other way than to put up a roundabout. There are three things we could have done -

- (i) we could have put up an acceleration and deceleration lane. But, by doing so, we are transferring the problem to the roundabout of Terre Rouge, and it would have been impossible for that roundabout to cope with the density of the traffic. That was out, and it was not acceptable either by the RDA, TMRSU or even the consultants;
- (ii) the second issue would have been a great separated junction. But, we would have had to relocate the Ramnarain Government School which is by the side. It is not possible to put up a great separated junction because of lack of space, and
- (iii) the third issue was only a roundabout, which is according to international norms. At the same time, we have got the consultant, Luxconsult Ltd, which is working on the project, and they have proposed that, later on, a flyover over the roundabout can be constructed. It will be just like any other flyovers which we have been constructing, but that will be in the years to come. It may come afterwards, once the Jin Fei development has already taken place.

So, there was no other way than to go for the roundabout.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister seems to say that it is normal practice and as per international standards that we have three roundabouts on a highway, within a distance of less than one kilometre.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that, being given that such a big development is taking place in that particular region, there are only three solutions, and we have to select one which is the best and most appropriate. Government has felt that it is the most appropriate, and that is the reason why I have submitted three reports: one from the RDA, properly prepared by the technicians of the Ministry in whom we have got full confidence - we trust them - because they have been looking over all our road networks; second by the TMRSU, by no less a person than Dr. Reesaul, who is an eminent research scholar in that field and, third, from the consultant. We are convinced that the action that we have taken is the appropriate one.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the congestion problem that people have to face during the morning and evening peak hours in that area?

**Mr Bachoo:** I am fully aware of it, and that is the reason why - probably the hon. Member is not aware - we have already started the construction of a third lane. The works order

was given on 25 March. Works have already started, and it will be completed by the end of October. The third lane is going to link Jin Fei roundabout to Terre Rouge roundabout, and the traffic moving towards Triolet and Trou aux Biches will take that road. Ultimately, this third lane will be extended till Quay D roundabout.

### **HERMITAGE -FOOTBALL GROUND**

**(No. 1B/89) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground at Hermitage, in Constituency No.15 – La Caverne and Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, information as to whether the football ground has been handed over by the Highlands Sugar Estate to the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, and, if not, the reasons therefor, indicating the measures to be taken.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in reply to a Parliamentary Question addressed to me on 23 March 2010 by hon. Soodhun, I stated that no upgrading works on the football ground at Hermitage had started because the land was not yet vested in my Ministry for the use by the Council.

Today, I wish to inform the House that the portion of land of the extent of 4020.46m<sup>2</sup> at Hermitage, on which stands the football ground, has been vested in my Ministry on 07 June 2010, to be put at the disposal of the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix for its upgrading.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister mention the date on which the land was vested with the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix?

**Mr Aimée:** I just mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it was on 07 June 2010. It is the Municipality that I am talking about.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Can the hon. Minister confirm the date on which the land has been vested in the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix?

**Mr Aimée:** I have already answered that question. It is on 07 June.

### **CITÉ RICHELIEU - VOLLEYBALL PITCH**

**(No. 1B/90) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the volleyball pitch situated at Cité Richelieu, he will state -

- (a) when it was commissioned;
- (b) if it has been handed over to any local authority, indicating the name thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor, and
- (c) the actions being taken to ensure proper maintenance and fencing of the pitch.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the project of a contract value of Rs10.5 m. includes the construction of a sports complex, a leisure park and upgrading of a volleyball pitch. The volleyball pitch project was commissioned on 23 March 2006 and handed over to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund on the same date.

The volleyball pitch, which is maintained by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, is not being fully utilised following severe acts of vandalism. Part of the fencing and the gate has been damaged, and all electrical installations have been stolen.

As the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is not able to repair the vandalised volleyball pitch because of scarcity of funds, I have requested the NDU to study the possibility of repairing the volleyball pitch.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can the hon. Minister confirm that, in fact, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund has never even put a watchman or maintained anything there? The door is permanently closed, and this is why people have to break into the fencing to get inside the yard to play matches.

**Mr Bachoo:** I get the impression that the hon. Member is condoning such acts of vandalism; one thing is clear, we have already handed over the volleyball pitch...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take exception to what the hon. Minister has said regarding the fact that I am condoning acts of vandalism. What I am saying is that people have to force through the fence to get to the volleyball pitch, because it is permanently closed. There is no one to open the door.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in any case, we would like to condemn such acts of vandalism because this is the case in many places. There are places where we have put people to look after them but, despite that, there have been acts of vandalism, which need to be condemned. That is why I mentioned that I have requested the NDU to study the possibility of repairing the volleyball pitch. This is taxpayers' money, and every cent spent must be properly spent. I have requested the officers of my Ministry to have a look at it and see how we can repair things.

**Mr Barbier:** Can I ask the hon. Minister why such an important complex has been vested with the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund rather than the district council, which has the labour force to run that type of complex?

**Mr Bachoo:** It has already been vested with the Sugar Industry. I will talk to my colleague of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund and see the possibility of transferring it to this district council. We have no problem with that.

#### **NRPT - REVENUE COLLECTED**

**(No. 1B/91) 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 National Residential Property Tax, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of revenues collected therefrom, on a yearly basis, since its introduction to date, and
- (b) state whether it is proposed to -
  - (i) abolish the tax and, if so, indicate its effective date or
  - (ii) restructure the tax and, if so, the reasons for each proposal.

*(Vide reply to PNQ)*

#### **TAX ON INTEREST**

**(No. 1B/92) 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 tax on interest, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount collected on a yearly basis since its introduction to date, and
- (b) state whether it is envisaged to have it abolished and, if so, indicate if it will still be in force in the current fiscal year.

*(Vide reply to PNQ)*

### **NATIONAL ECONOMY- EURO CRISIS**

**(No. 1B/93) 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 national economy, he will state if since his assumption of office –

- (a) a study has been carried out in regard to its vulnerability to external shocks, including the Euro crisis
- (b) if it is proposed to review Government's fiscal strategy towards the private sector and
- (c) whether the additional stimulus package will be extended to the year 2011.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry keeps a daily watch on developments on international financial and money markets, on forex markets, and global economic growth and the economic performances of major economies across the globe. There is also a constant monitoring of main economic indicators in Mauritius, namely GDP, consumption, savings, investment, balance of payments, inflation, unemployment, job creation and the performances of the key sectors of the economy. We also watch very closely, on a monthly basis, the evolution of public finances, in particular the deficit and debt.

There is a Macroeconomic Coordination Committee (MCC) at the Ministry that comprises the Bank of Mauritius and the CSO, and that monitors all macroeconomic indicators on a regular basis with a focus on the various vulnerabilities and how local and external events are impacting on them. This Committee also monitors changes in behavioural patterns that can lead to major structural changes in the economy.

For example, the MCC is now focusing on studying the declining national savings rate and movements in the balance of payments, with emphasis on the impact of the Euro crisis. The MCC is also studying how the impact of the Euro crisis is working its way through the economy.

When there are external shocks or unexpected economic events, more specialised committees are set up to assess the impact. In fact, my first priority since assuming office was to set up a Technical Working Group to study and monitor the Euro crisis, fully assess its impact on our economy and to recommend appropriate policy responses. That Technical Working Group is working with the Bank of Mauritius, the Joint Economic Council and various Ministries, namely the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of Labour, amongst others. I will soon be making an announcement on the policies and actions we will take to build resilience against this crisis.

As regards part (b) of the question, if there is to be any change in fiscal policy towards the private sector, it will be announced in the next Budget. However, I can give the House the assurance that, with regard to fiscal policy, we will implement all the pledges we have made in our electoral manifesto and in the President's Address. I can also assure the House that any change in fiscal policy will be made in the best interest of the broader economy and the population, and to ensure that there is higher and better quality growth and more equity.

As regards part (c) of the question, it has already been replied in the PNQ.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the past criticisms levelled by the hon. Minister himself on the former Government, would he be able to table a report on the evaluation of the state of the economy since his assumption of office, so that we can cross-check whether all his criticisms were justified?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I think any new Government will make a *constat* of the economic situation and, therefore, I have no problem. In fact, we are working towards making a *constat* of the economic situation, the economic indicators, and shortly I will go public.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Will the hon. Minister also be in a position to tell us whether the result of his study on the job creation situation or employment situation is worse than what has been expected or whether, in the light of the downside revision of the economic growth, the impact on the employment situation can be weathered through?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I have just said that there is a technical working group that is looking into the matter, and shortly I will be coming with a number of measures. I think the hon. Member has to be patient. Thereafter, of course, I will be open to address any issue that needs to be covered.

### **MONT ROCHES-CHEBEL LINK ROAD - HUMPS**

**(No. 1B/94) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the link road Mont Roches-Chebel at the rear of the Beau Bassin Prisons, he will consider putting up road humps thereat to ensure road safety.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TMRSU that there already exist two road humps on the link road of Mont Roches-Chebel at the back of Beau Bassin Prisons. I have also been informed that the vehicular traffic volume on that road is very low and, therefore, the putting up of additional speed calming devices is not warranted.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this road starts from Mont Roches and ends up at Cité Chebel, passing through Cité Barkly. The problem exists at Cité Barkly; there are a lot of houses and all the children go to Mont Roches School. It is true that there are two humps, but they are at the beginning of Mont Roches and not at Cité Barkly, which is a very dense region, and I think it is essential for his Ministry to find ways and means to protect the children of the region.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take note of the request of my friend, but at the same time I would like to say that the road humps are not deterrent to accidents. Besides, we have got emergency services; they are always requesting us not to go ahead by placing too many humps. I have recently received many requests for removal of humps, because that create too much of noise and particularly for those people who are sick. And, secondly, we have also seen cracks appearing on the walls of houses also. So, all these create big problems, but I am going to request officers of my Ministry to have a look at it.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** In order to avoid future accidents, could the hon. Minister carry out an in-depth study of the situation there? Because there are many schoolchildren and young people using this road.

**Mr Bachoo:** In a small island like ours, we have got 3,800 humps now. We have to see places where we can remove them and, where necessary, in extremely important places, we can put up a few humps.

### **PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - QUALITY CONTROL**

**(No. 1B/95) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products, she will state -

- (a) the steps taken by her Ministry to ensure the quality and effectiveness thereof in the health sector and more particularly in the public sector, and
- (b) whether the products are subject to an independent control by an accredited laboratory.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to PQ Nos. 1B/95 and 1B/97 together.

With regard to pharmaceutical products used in Mauritius, my Ministry takes all the necessary steps to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the products in the health sector, including the public sector.

The quality and effectiveness of any pharmaceutical product depends on the process of manufacture and quality control based on international standards.

A manufacturer is required to submit to the Pharmacy Board its drug manufacturing licence, a certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), as well as a Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (COPP) issued by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin. These certificates testify that the manufacturing plant is regularly inspected by the National Drug Regulatory Authority and meet all the international standards.

I also wish to inform the House that all pharmaceutical products have to be registered with the Pharmacy Board prior to their import and sale on the local market. Pharmaceutical products manufactured on the local market have also to be registered with the Pharmacy Board before they are put on sale.

All pharmaceutical products registered with the Pharmacy Board have to meet the same criteria, as I have just mentioned, in order to ensure their quality and effectiveness.

As regards the control of the pharmaceutical products by an accredited laboratory, I am informed that, up to July 2009, pharmaceutical products were sent for analysis to a laboratory in South Africa, which is a World Health Organisation accredited Quality Control Laboratory. Due to its prohibitive cost and the long time taken for analysis of the drugs, my Ministry has, since July 2009, upgraded the services of the Government Analyst Division by setting up a modern Pharmaceutical Quality Control Laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment. All the samples analysed so far by the Government Analyst Division have met the relevant international standards.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** In view of the fact that registration of pharmaceutical products in Mauritius is free and lifetime, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform me about the process of continuous sampling, random sampling, batch control, shelf control at the end of the chain, especially in view of the fact that most of us who consume pharmaceutical products in hospitals are not even aware of the expiry date, and also taking into consideration the climatic conditions for storage of pharmaceutical products in our pharmacies, be it Government or public. Is there this continuous process of control sampling? And, if there has been, could the hon. Minister table the products which have been sampled by the famous lab in South Africa and let us know what action, if any, has been taken towards deregistration?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that continuous sampling is done and, this year, 43 pharmaceutical products have been submitted and analysed. Let me also inform the hon. Member that, with respect to expiry dates, storage and so on, I am proceeding ahead with *l'informatisation du système pour qu'on puisse repérer à temps les médicaments qui arrivent à expiration.*

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Will the hon. Minister please confirm or otherwise, whether the compounded products which are produced in our hospitals' pharmacies are subject to the Pharmacy Board control? Do pharmaceutical veterinary products, which are pharmaceutical products as well, fall under the control of the Pharmacy Board? Are intravenous fluids, which are sold in our pharmacies, also fall under the Pharmacy Board?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say that these are very technical questions but I can, again, reassure the hon. Member that all samples are taken and are being analysed by our lab and, as I have stated in my reply, up to now there has been no counterfeit found.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that, until recently, Rotaz, which is a medicine for cholesterol, for heart diseases, was dispensed in our hospitals and was substandard, and some doctors privately advised patients not to use it because it is less efficient?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware whether there has been medication which has been issued and was substandard. I am saying that, regularly, we have samples which are being analysed. I bet that our medicines cannot be substandard.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister table the list of all the products which have been registered with the Pharmacy Board?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have no problem in tabling these information.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the Procurement Board bases its decision on the principle of the lowest tenderer for the purchase of medicine, without any regard to the quality and efficacy of the medicine?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the procurement of any pharmaceutical product is made through tender exercise, and the evaluation of the tenders is based on the following criteria: suppliers are required to submit a Certificate of Good Manufacturing Practice as well as a Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product, which are issued by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin; the licence to manufacture pharmaceutical products by the National Drug Regulatory Authority of the country of origin is taken into consideration; the company's capacity to supply the drug in the required quantity; the company's experience in the manufacture of a specific item; the delivery time as per the requirements of the Ministry; the companies' past performance evaluated on the basis of records, and also the price quoted.

**Mr Dayal:** I can privately give the information later to the hon. Minister. But then, is the hon. Minister aware that, some two years ago, I personally raised a question in this House, and a

Fact Finding Committee was established, chaired by Senior Magistrate Mr Raj Pentiah, and made 13 recommendations? Are these recommendations being implemented?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to look into this. I have just been in the Ministry for six weeks now; I have not taken note yet of this report.

#### **PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - PHARMACOVIGILANCE PROGRAMME**

**(No. 1B/96) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products, she will state if –

- (a) it is proposed to re-introduce the Pharmacovigilance programme, with a view to protect, educate and update consumers thereon, and
- (b) the reasons as to why the previous programme was discontinued.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question of re-introducing the Pharmacovigilance programme does not arise, as I am informed that a Pharmacovigilance Unit set up on a pilot basis, in November 2008, at Flacq Hospital, is still operational. The Unit is headed by the Regional Health Director of the hospital and comprises the Medical Superintendent, the Consultant in charge, General Medicine, the Consultant Paediatrics, the Dermatologist, the Pharmacist and the Regional Nursing Administrator.

The Unit monitors adverse drugs reaction reports, and gives appropriate feedback to all concerned.

In fact, my Ministry is finalising a training programme for Government pharmacists in Pharmacovigilance with the World Health Organisation, through its Biennium Programme 2010/2011, so that they will be more conversant in all aspects regarding adverse drug reporting systems, collection and analysis of data, and the subsequent interpretation of the results.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that only Flacq Hospital is pharmacovigilant and this country contains more than Flacq Hospital, I would be most grateful if this kind of programme could be extended to all hospitals; constant monitoring and information about medication being given. We have lately been informed about a lot of adverse drug reactions in Moka Eye Hospital, in addition to what the hon. Minister mentioned. I would also

beg the hon. Minister to look into it seriously, as I do not believe and trust all these labs of good repute from where our pharmaceutical products seem to be coming in.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said in my reply that, at Flacq Hospital, it was on a pilot basis, and it is proposed to extend the programme to all regional hospitals after completion of training.

As regards the remarks made by the hon. Member that he does not trust our labs, let me say that MAURITAS is actually accrediting all the labs, and we have to go according to certain norms.

### **PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - REGISTRATION**

**(No. 1B/97) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products on sale on the local market, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pharmacy Board, information as to if they are duly registered by the Board.

*(Vide Reply to PQ No. 1B/95)*

### **CITÉ JOACHIM, CUREPIPE – WATER SUPPLY**

**(No. 1B/98) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Cité Joachim, in Curepipe, he will state if he is aware if the water supply thereat is irregular, and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken to address the issue.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Cité Joachim is supplied from La Brasserie Service reservoir, which is fed from La Marie Treatment works. The hours of supply are from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Complaints of poor water pressure at Cité Joachim, Brown Squard, Barry streets and the adjoining areas were registered by the CWA on 05 June 2010.

CWA carried out a leak detection exercise on 06, 07 and 08 June 2010 along a stretch of 15 kms of pipeline, and identified a burst pipe downstream of Cité Joachim. Repairs were

completed on 09 June 2010, and the water supply was accordingly restored. I am informed that, since then, there has been no record of complaint.

### **SPORTS FEDERATIONS – CLUBS - AFFILIATION**

**(No. 1B/99) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to sports activities, he will give a list of the clubs which are affiliated to the sports federations recognised by the Ministry, indicating, in each case, the discipline.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at date, my Ministry recognises 41 sports federations, under the Sports Act.

Every federation, through its regional sports committees, regroups sports clubs in respect of its sports discipline. Each club should be enrolled within its appropriate region.

A sports federation is required, under the Sports Act, to cover all the 13 sport regions, unless otherwise authorised by the Minister.

A list of clubs affiliated to sports federations, in respect of their disciplines is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as ready.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant qu'il existe des clubs qui font pression sur certaines fédérations pour être affiliés, alors que ces mêmes clubs ne respectent pas les critères d'affiliation.

**Mr Ritoo:** I think the hon. Member is talking about fictitious sports clubs. But a club which is not actively promoting sports cannot be represented within a sports federation. Presently, we have clubs which are supposed to be registered with the regional committee but then seek affiliation with the sports federation. Any seven members can form a club and get registration with the Registrar of Associations, and join a fixed sports federation. But, we are coming with the Sports Act. There will be amendments brought to the Sports Act, and these amendments will give us a clear distinction of what is a fictitious club.

**Mr Quirin:** Dans ces conditions, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si son ministère dispose d'un moyen de contrôle pour s'assurer qu'effectivement ces clubs qui sont enregistrés auprès des fédérations sont *genuine* ?

**Mr Ritoo:** As I said, we are coming with amendments to the Sports Act very shortly, and then we will be able to put guidelines on how to control such clubs that do not comply.

*(Interruptions)*

Well, actually, we don't have any control over them.

**Mr Bhagwan :** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'il y a une complicité entre certains au *Registrar of Associations* et certains clubs fictifs? *Zot même président, zot même secrétaire, zot même trésorier.* Finalement, ce sont ces mêmes membres des clubs fictifs qui vont voter pour les élections des fédérations. Si, aujourd'hui, nous voyons qu'il y a une dégradation du football et d'autres disciplines, c'est grâce à ces personnes qui, eux-mêmes, font la pluie et le beau temps au niveau des fédérations. Et c'est cela le déclin de notre football à Maurice.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't have any control for the time being. This has been prevailing since 2001. We are now coming with amendments to the Sports Act, and we will debate on that.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Est-ce que le ministre est disposé à parler à son collègue, qui est responsable et qui a l'autorité sur le *Registrar of Associations*, afin qu'il y ait de l'ordre au niveau du *Registrar*? Le trafic se fait - je le dis dans cette Chambre - au niveau du *Registrar of Associations*. Il y a une complicité.

**Mr Ritoo:** I have already talked to my colleague Minister, and he is having the situation under control.

### **INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS GAMES 2011 – SPORTS DISCIPLINE**

**(No. 1B/100) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the forthcoming 2011 Indian Ocean Islands Games, he will give -

- (a) the list of disciplines scheduled for the Games, indicating if Mauritian athletes will participate in all the disciplines;

- (b) the measures taken by his Ministry to ensure the adequate training of the participating teams/athletes, indicating the budget allocated in respect of each discipline.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Indian Ocean Islands Games, which will be held in Seychelles, from 05 to 14 August, 2011, 12 sports disciplines have been retained as follows -

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Athletics  | 7. Judo           |
| 2. Badminton  | 8. Swimming       |
| 3. Basketball | 9. Table Tennis   |
| 4. Boxing     | 10. Volleyball    |
| 5. Cycling    | 11. Weightlifting |
| 6. Football   | 12. Yachting      |

Mauritius will participate in all the sports disciplines I just mentioned.

As regards part (b) of the question, regarding measures taken by my Ministry, immediately after the confirmation of the sports disciplines retained for the Games, in September 2009, I met all sports federations concerned to inform them accordingly and to advise them to start preparation as early as possible. They were also requested to submit their work plan to my Ministry, which they have already done.

Meetings were also held between the federations and technicians of my Ministry in April 2010 to discuss strategies and other issues regarding the preparation of athletes.

I wish to advise the hon. Member that it is the role of the federations to ensure proper physical and technical preparation of their athletes. The responsibility of my Ministry is to provide financial and logistics support at the request of federations, that is, we rather act as facilitator with each federation.

Sports federations are at present proceeding with the pre-selection of athletes in their respective sports discipline and I understand that this exercise will be completed by end of July 2010.

With regard to funding, part provision for the training of pre-selected athletes has been made in the budget earmarked for each sports federation in the present financial year. Being given that the Games will be held in August 2011, provision for additional funds will be made in the next financial year, specifically for the extensive training of the final selection of athletes retained for the Indian Ocean Islands Games.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, vu l'importance de ces jeux, qui sont prévus dans 13 mois à peu près aux Seychelles, le ministre peut-il nous dire s'il est satisfait de la manière dont les différentes sélections nationales se préparent en ce moment?

**Mr Ritoo:** As I mentioned earlier, it is the sports federation which is supposed to make the preparation of the athletes. So far I am concerned, and as per the meetings I have had with the concerned sports federations, I am satisfied.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais aussi savoir du ministre si les fédérations concernées par ces jeux ont obtenu un budget spécifique pour leur préparation.

**Mr Ritoo:** I think the hon. Member should have listened properly, because part provision for the training of the athletes has been made in the budget earmarked for each sports federation in the present financial year.

As regards provision for additional funds, it will be made in the next financial year, specifically for extensive training for the final selection of athletes.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps he intends to take to ensure that the problems existing at the head of some federations do not impede the training of the participating teams.

**Mr Ritoo:** Regarding the participation in the IOIG, everything is fine as far as sports disciplines are concerned. We don't have any problem with any particular federation. If there is any problem with a sports federation, we will deal with it. Actually, there is no problem.

**Mr François:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are pre-selected athletes from Rodrigues who are trained in Rodrigues for the coming 2011 IOIG. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether any specific measures had been worked out with different sports federations to extend same facilities, which will be available here in Mauritius, to those Rodriguan athletes who are potential medallists?

**Mr Rittoo:** All athletes who have been qualified to represent Mauritius through their sports federations are getting the same facilities, whether they are Mauritians or Rodriguans. Help will be given equally to the Rodriguans, and we should always keep in mind that our best athletes are from Rodrigues.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Le ministre vient de dire que le ministère n'a pas de juridiction, mais le gouvernement donne de l'argent ; il y a un budget. On donne suffisamment d'argent pour la préparation de nos équipes, mais nous avons l'expérience du passé. Ce qui nous intéresse, c'est la réputation de l'île Maurice. Nous ne voulons pas que l'île Maurice se retrouve dans la même situation que l'équipe bleu-blanc-rouge de France ces jours-ci, avec des entraîneurs...

*(Interruptions)*

I have heard, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Mr Domenech would be around for holidays. I hope the Minister...

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should put his question, please!

**Mr Bhagwan:** I hope the Minister does not think of recruiting that guy for our national team. Il y va de notre réputation. Nous avons eu l'expérience des derniers jeux : *fail partout ! Pa resultat lor resultat ça !* We are nearly on the eve of the IOIG. I trust the hon. Minister personally. He has given results; he brought medals - not the other one! Can the hon. Minister give assurance that, at least, the House and the country would be informed regularly of the progress achieved for every discipline?

**Mr Rittoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being an ex-athlete myself, I am very concerned regarding the preparation of all the athletes participating in the IOIG. I can assure all the Members here *que c'est la fierté de toute l'île Maurice d'avoir le maximum de médailles.*

#### **SEEDOYAL LANE, BEAU BASSIN – DRAIN PROJECT**

**(No. 1B/101) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to drain works in front of the Beau-Bassin Swastika Mandir situated at Belvédère, he will state -

- (a) whether any project has been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate the date of the implementation, and

- (b) whether a joint site visit has been effected by the officers of the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and that of the National Development Unit in connection therewith.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scope of work and design for a drain project at Seedoyal Lane, Beau Bassin, has been finalised and is estimated at around Rs30 m.

The implementation of the project has been delayed because of major way leave issues involving some 50 land owners, some of whom being reluctant to forego the required land which, in a few cases, has already been built upon.

As at now, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has constructed an absorption drain of 30 metres long, which was completed on 31 May this year.

Works related to NDU's project at Seedoyal Lane, Beau Bassin, would be scheduled once the way leave issues have been addressed.

**Mr Bhagwan:** May I make a request to the Minister? It is not only in front of Swastika Mandir, Beau Bassin, but the whole region of Belvédère. There was a drain project at the end of 2005. But, we all know what happened post-2005; there has not been any PPS *dans l'endroit*. Can I ask the hon. Minister to have, at least, a site visit there - he always makes site visits - with his officers, to see to it that works be done in the surrounding region also?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned, the consultants have done a good work there. They have been able to locate places where drain works have to be effected. Unfortunately, we have the problem of way leave. First of all, we have to call these people, talk to them and make an appeal to them to allow us access; otherwise, if we are going to start the procedures for acquisition, it would take too much time. Secondly, we also get challenges. It is not that easy. At times, we take a decision; we start implementing, and on the way we get stuck. Once we get the way leave, I will request the PPS for the region to expedite matters, but, at our end, we are willing to start the project at any time.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister talks about PPS, I am worried, because last time we had a PPS who spent his time giving access to the VIP lounge. He never turned up in the constituency.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Question please!

**Mr Bhagwan:** What I am asking the Minister is to personally see to it that works are done before the rainy season.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, once way leave is obtained, work are going to start. For 20 years, we have waited for *Chemin la mort*, and now the hon. Member knows that works have already started; we are completing the work.

*(Interruptions)*

Be patient, we are going to do the work! It takes a little bit of time, that's all!

### **RESIDENCE BARKLY - MARKET FAIR - TENDER**

**(No. 1B/102) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the market fair at Residence Barkly, Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to –

- (a) when the tender was awarded;
- (b) the value of the contract, indicating the name of the contractor, and
- (c) when works are expected to start and the duration thereof.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that the contract for the construction of a market fair at Résidence Barkly had been awarded on 18 August 2008 to Procivil Works Co. Ltd. of 13, Prince of Wales street, Rose Hill, for the sum of Rs4,979,167.88 inclusive of VAT.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that works started on 01 September 2008 and the duration period was 120 days, meaning that, contractually, the works were to be completed by 21 December 2008. The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has informed that variations to the scope of works were brought to the project in September 2009 when the Works Committee...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please! No cross talking, please!

*(Interruptions)*

Silence, please! Please proceed with the reply!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Barbier, please! I am on my feet. The hon. Member should sit down when I am on my feet. Silence, please! I trust that when the speaker is on his feet, all Members are going to remain silent, and they are going to listen to the hon. Minister who is answering the question.

**Mr Aimée:** The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has informed that variations to the scope of works were brought to the project in September 2009 when the Works Committee decided to convert four spaces from offices into stalls to sell fish, poultry, beef and pork. The practical handing over of the market is scheduled for 28 June 2010 at 10.00 hours.

**Mr Bhagwan:** M. le président, il y a un grand scandale, et je demanderai au ministre de faire une enquête. Je sais que cela dépend de la municipalité. On a cessé les travaux depuis belle lurette. Il n'y a plus de chantier. *Can the hon. Minister ask either the Director of Audit or the Audit section of his Ministry to go through the tender procedures, and make a site visit to see whether the taxpayers of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill are having value for money? C'est le plus grand scandale que j'ai vu durant ces dernières années.* I would also ask the hon. Minister to look into the question of allocation of stalls, and whether the correct procedure has been followed.

**Mr Aimée:** I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I will inquire with the officers of my Ministry and come back to Parliament.

### ***FESTIVAL KREOL 2009***

**(No. B/103) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the last edition of *Festival Kreol*, he will state if the services of Mrs C. H-B and Check-in Travel were retained as coordinator and consultant respectively and, if so, the fees paid to each of them.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the services of Mrs C. H-B and Check-in Travel were not retained as coordinator and consultant respectively in connection with the 2009 edition of *Festival Kreol*.

However, with regard to Check-in Travel, I am informed that one air ticket was purchased from the agency for one *conférencier* who was invited to participate in the *Festival International Kreol* 2009 from the Seychelles. An amount of Rs17,027.80 was paid for the air ticket. However, there was no payment of any fee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that Mrs C. H-B was one of the various resource persons who have assisted benevolently in the organisation of *Festival Kreol*.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le président, est-ce que, dans un souci de transparence, le ministre est disposé de mettre à la disposition du parlement les sommes payées à ladite personne ou à ladite compagnie pour les précédentes éditions de 'Festival *Kreol*', mis à part celle de 2009 ?

**Mr Bodha:** M. le président, pour les précédentes éditions, in 2007, the MTPA paid for two tickets; one for Rs21,978, and a second one Rs19,242. There was another ticket which was paid in 2008 for a sum of Rs19,707.25, and the fees which were paid for that ticket were Rs4,280.

**Mr Ramano:** Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre si c'est la politique générale du ministère ou de la MTPA d'acheter directement avec les agences privées ou bien de donner préférence à la compagnie *Air Mauritius*?

**Mr Bodha:** M. le président, je pense que la pratique est d'utiliser le TSC *agreement*, mais quand on ne peut pas avoir recours au TSC *agreement* avec *Air Mauritius*, on achète les billets directement avec les autres compagnies.

#### DOGS - STERILISATION

(No. 1B/104) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the sterilisation of dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and the Tourism Authority, information as to the amount paid to PAWS in connection therewith for each of the last four financial years.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proliferation of stray dogs and cats is a serious environmental problem, which represents not only serious health hazards to our tourists and to the population at large, but also impacts adversely on the image that we want to project of Mauritius as an upmarket high-class tourist destination. There have been, as you are aware,

many complaints from stakeholders, from visitors to tour operators concerning the stray dogs' problem in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Members of the House will agree with me that, for many years, this problem has reached such an alarming proportion that there was a pressing need to address it.

Following consultations with parties concerned, it was considered that a two-pronged approach had to be adopted to address the problem effectively; firstly, the control of stray dogs and cats by MSPCA and secondly the sterilisation of the animals by PAWS.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that it was with this objective in mind that the Ministry decided to extend its assistance to PAWS for its sterilization programme. The objective of the programme is to address the problem in a humane manner and to provide a safe, hygienic and healthy environment for local people, as well as for the tourists visiting the country.

Initially, the financial assistance of the Ministry, through the Tourism Authority, took the form of a grant of Rs375 per animal sterilised as from December 2007. That amount represents part of the cost for the sterilisation of the animal, which comprises medication, salaries of personnel, running expenses of the mobile clinics which travel to different localities. Part of the cost was met by a foreign sponsor who was based in Mauritius. However, upon his departure from the country, the rate was subsequently increased to Rs600 to meet the totality of the cost involved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to underline that the service provided by PAWS is not only free, but is accessible to a large number of people through provision of the services on site by its mobile clinics. The cost of the service is well below the rate practised by private veterinary surgeons, which is around Rs1200 and even below that of the MSPCA, which is Rs700. In addition, the owners have to move their animals to these places for treatment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the total amount disbursed to PAWS by the Tourism Authority for the last four financial years amounts to Rs3,520,875, in connection with its sterilisation programme as follows -

Year 2005/2006 - Nil

Year 2006/2007 - Nil

Year 2007/2008 - Rs1,388,625

Year 2008/2009 - Rs2,132,250

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition, an amount of Rs152,317 has been disbursed by MTPA in respect of air tickets issued in favour of foreign veterinary surgeons who are called upon by PAWS to provide their services to that organisation as follows -

Year 2005/2006 - Rs50,340

Year 2006/2007 - Nil

Year 2007/2008 - Rs42,208

Year 2008/2009 - Rs59,769

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that assistance amounting to Rs11,372,816 has also been provided to the MSPCA for the control of stray dogs and cats over the years 2007 to 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that this sponsorship of the Government to PAWS dates back as far as 2002, and it is in the same spirit that the then Ministry of Environment has assisted PAWS for a total amount of Rs350,000 in 2002 and 2003.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sterilisation programme of PAWS has been effective in curtailing the population of stray animals. Up to date, 10,670 dogs and 2,621 cats have been sterilised by PAWS, that is, about 300 per month, that is, about 10 per day.

**Mr Ramano:** Peut-on savoir du ministre s'il existe un contrat qui a été signé à cet effet avec l'organisation PAWS? Si oui, est-ce qu'il est possible de mettre ce contrat à la disposition de l'Assemblée ?

**Mr Bodha :** Oui, on n'a pas de problème pour le faire.

#### **FOOTBALL WORLD CUP, SOUTH AFRICA – PROMOTION CAMPAIGN**

**(No. 1B/105) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Football World Cup in

South Africa, he will state the outcome of the actions taken by his Ministry to market Mauritius as a destination in the context thereof.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the holding of the Football World Cup in South Africa represented an opportunity for Mauritius to capitalise on the historical importance of the event in the African Continent and to attract some of the international football fans to Mauritius.

In this regard, negotiations were held with Match Events Services Ltd, in order to secure some hotel rooms for the accommodation of the international football fans in Mauritius, under the Matchville Accommodation Programme Initiative.

Under the Programme, an agreement was signed with Match Events Services Ltd for securing 3,200 rooms during the period of the World Cup, that is, from 06 June to 13 July 2010. At that time, the organisers expected that around 550,000 international fans would be travelling to South Africa to watch all the matches. The agreement entered into was made by Match Events Ltd on expectations that accommodation facilities in South Africa would not be adequate for the accommodation of all the football fans. In fact, they bet on the over spilling effect of the number of tourists coming. We have been advised that other agreements were made with other South African countries. However, in view of the global financial crisis, the sales of the FIFA packages have been slow and well below expectations. Accordingly, Matchville Events Ltd decided to cancel the agreement with Mauritius on 15 January 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that some 350,000 tickets had to be released by the FIFA tour operators worldwide to be sold free in the open market in South Africa, as a result of reluctance of consumers to purchase packages including the Matchville accommodation. Subsequently, the agreements made with other South African countries under the Programme have had to be cancelled as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, following the cancellation of the agreement by Matchville Events Ltd, the MTPA, together with Air Mauritius, launched an advertising campaign 'Escape South Africa Plan', with a view to attracting people to spend holidays in Mauritius. The MTPA has invested some Rs2m. in that project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the final outcome of the campaign will have to be evaluated in due course. However, it seems that the campaign is being very effective and has had the desired

impact so far. Accordingly, in the last statistical bulletin for the month of May 2010, there has been an increase of 9.2% in tourist arrivals, including 8% from South Africa. From the figures available at the International Airport, passenger arrivals for the period 01 June to 20 June 2010 have recorded an increase of around 8500, representing a growth of around 19% as compared to the corresponding period of last year. It is expected that there will be an additional 1,500 tourists up to the end of this June 2010, which will result in an increase of around 10,000 visitors as compared to June last year.

**Mr Ramano:** M le président, peut-on savoir du ministre si les pays tels que la Nouvelle Zélande et l'Australie ou la Corée ont été approchés pour faire de Maurice un lieu d'entraînement pour la coupe du monde ?

**Mr Bodha:** En ce qui concerne l'entraînement, je pense que la question aurait dû être adressée à mon collègue. *I would like to enlighten the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, in the June edition of Eco Austral...*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please!

**Mr Bodha:** Dans l'édition de juin d'Eco Austral, un des principaux articles dit, que déçu par le mondial, le tourisme Sud Africain vise le long terme ; qu'au départ, on avait prévu 450,000 arrivées, puis on est passé à 375,000, et maintenant on n'aura peut être que 250,000, et qu'il faudra rester optimiste quant à l'impact médiatique de l'événement plus tard.

**Mr Ramano:** Est-ce que le ministre est en mesure de chiffrer le manque à gagner suite à la rupture du contrat de l'organisation Matchville avec les groupes hôteliers mauriciens ?

**Mr Bodha:** The fact that we have had 10,000 new tourists, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will bring additional earnings, and I do not think that we will be able to evaluate what we have lost as regards to what we have won.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Il y a eu beaucoup de bruit et des *statements in the House* concernant le World Cup et l'apport du tourisme, avec des étrangers qui allaient transiter à Maurice. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire quel est le montant qui a été dépensé, que ce soit par la MTPA ou le gouvernement, *for the whole campaign of bringing not only clubs but also tourists to Mauritius ? Apart from what he is saying, what has been the cost of the promotion campaign?*

**Mr Bodha:** From what I understand, from the records, I think it was at Indaba, South Africa, last year, where the Matchville Chairman announced this programme to bring people to the Indian Ocean area zone to watch the matches and back to Mauritius. I think that there was no additional cost. It was at the Mauritian stand. As regards to whether we had some promotion budget, I mentioned that there were about Rs2 m. which were spent.

### **TOURISM AUTHORITY - RECRUITMENT**

**(No. 1B/106) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Tourism Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number of employees recruited on a yearly basis since 2005 to date, indicating their place of residence, and
- (b) the terms and conditions of employment of the manual workers.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information being requested at parts (a) and (b) of the question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the additional staff recruited at the Tourism Authority since 2005 comprised mostly of the personnel recruited for strengthening the Monitoring and Enforcement Unit and manual workers for implementing the Cleaning of the Destination Programme. Initially, these manual workers had been recruited for the control of Chikungunya and, subsequently, the scope of works under that Programme was enlarged. The Programme is in line with the objects of the Tourism Authority which provide, *inter alia*, for the promotion of the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Various projects have been implemented under the Programme in more than 500 sites throughout the island. These projects have contributed to the enhancement of the attractiveness of Mauritius as an upmarket tourist destination, and are in line with our vision of making Mauritius an '*Ile Durable*'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these projects are wide-ranging and include the following -

- embellishment works;
- installation of poster panels all around the island;

- upgrading works at NDHC all over the island;
- renovation works at *La Ferme des Rhums*;
- fighting of Dengue and Chikungunya and other mosquito related diseases;
- cleaning of bare lands, and
- painting and maintenance of bus stops.

Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I am circulating a list of projects which have been implemented under the Programme throughout the island and, as I said, works have been carried out over 500 sites.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le président, est-ce qu'on peut savoir s'il y a eu des appels à candidatures pour tous ces recrutements?

**Mr Bodha:** From the records, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was an expression of interest of the manual workers, and there was a bank which was created.

**Mr Ramano:** Est-ce que le ministre compte, dans les jours à venir, renouveler les contrats de ces travailleurs manuels qui sont arrivés à expiration ?

**Mr Bodha:** It should be reviewed on a case to case basis, depending on skill, performance and availability of funds.

**Mr Ramano:** Peut-on savoir du ministre si les contributions de la NPF ont été faites par l'employeur et l'employé, et s'il y a eu des remboursements pour les *sick leaves* et les différents *local leaves* ?

**Mr Bodha:** As by law, it should have been done. I will check that.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Il y a un problème, M le président. Je ne vois plus les 'verts' à l'île Maurice ; ils ont subitement disparu. Où sont les véhicules, les poubelles? Mon problème c'est l'argent public et ces travaux inachevés - *ine fouille trou mais pas fine met pied coco*, par exemple. Le ministre Duval est en train de répondre.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** Ce qui m'intéresse, M. le président, c'est de savoir où sont les 'verts'. Rama Valayden *ine aller* ; il n'y a plus de 'verts' ; plus de MR.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your question, please! Order!

**Mr Bhagwan:** M. le président, où sont les 'verts', les poubelles, les vans, les tronçonneuses? Ces travaux sont inachevés, et je demanderai au ministre de faire le suivi avec ses officiers pour que les travaux commencés avant et pendant la campagne électorale soient complétés au plus vite dans l'intérêt du public.

Deuxièmement, quand le ministre parle de *case to case basis*, nous ne sommes pas étrangers à ces rouages de *pick and choose*. Je me fais le porte-parole de ces êtres humains qui ont été recrutés d'une façon ou d'une autre ; ce sont les gens de quartiers et il ne faut pas qu'on soit *unfair*. C'est cela mon message au ministre responsable. Ce qui nous est rapporté, c'est qu'il y a une politique...

*(Interruptions)*

*Let them try to learn, and then they will start barking. Mr Deputy Speaker Sir,...*

*(Interruptions)*

I have said it in general...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am not pinpointing any Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have said barking in general...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** What I am asking is whether there is going to be a *politique politicaille* in the choice of people who will be laid off at the Tourism Authority.

**Mr Bodha:** M. le président, l'unité est toujours là. L'honorable membre a fait deux bonnes suggestions, et on va en tenir compte.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT (FREE) FACILITIES - GOVT. POLICY**

**(No. 1B/107) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to free public transport facilities, he will state -

- (a) if the present policy is being reviewed and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the alternative measures that will be introduced in respect of
  - (i) old age pensioners;
  - (ii) students, and
  - (iii) other beneficiaries.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, free transport facilities are being granted to old age pensioners, the disabled persons and students travelling by public buses since 2005. This scheme is applicable in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The House is also aware that, in the President's address, mention has been made to the effect that the present policy of free travel scheme will be maintained. But the mechanism for payment will be reviewed to ensure efficiency gain. In this respect, several options are being analysed.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has now publicly confirmed what the MMM has been saying since 2005 regarding the lack of effectiveness of the hastily arrived at formula of 2005, that is, the wastage of public funds that have gone into implementation of this hastily arrived at formula. Will the hon. Minister agree to recommend to Government an overall assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the formula implemented since 2005 and, if not, why not?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not true to say that there has been wastage of public money; this is not the case. In fact, all of us know that there are many flaws in the existing system, and we have tried our level best in order to improve whatever is required. For example, there have been too many problems created by bus conductors, drivers, bus proprietors,

and all these things have been taken care of. Despite it, we have still seen certain flaws in the system, and that is the reason why Government has decided to look once again at the mode of payment. We are looking into it and, in fact, I have with me a report, which was prepared by Steer Davies Gleave, and I am going to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly, so that the Member can have a look at it. In fact, the method which we have introduced has been very interesting. Unfortunately, this method has got certain flaws, and that is the reason why we have instituted a Committee to look into the flaws and then to come forward with certain recommendations, which we are going to implement.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that these so called flaws have been publicly known since five long years, would the hon. Minister tell us why Government has had to wait until now to agree to what the Opposition, the MMM has been saying since long, namely that there is a need to review this whole formula?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have taken steps in order to control the situation. For example, we have taken action concerning all those who have not been following the rules of the game properly. For example, in 2004, we received 440 complaints, and last year we have received only 200 complaints. This means that actions have been taken and we have been able to obtain results.

In addition to these, we have got hundreds of cases where the bus drivers' licences were suspended. Even the road traffic permits of the bus proprietors have also been suspended for many months. So, actions have been taken, and the system that we have put in place has given results. But, as I have just mentioned, there are certain flaws. In any system we do have certain minus points, and once we come to know that there can be better systems that can be introduced, we are going to do so.

For example, in the report which I have submitted, it is clear that the existing system is a good one. But, unfortunately, we have seen the flaws; we have taken actions that need to be taken. Last year only, we have forfeited Rs5.2 m. that were supposed to be paid to the bus companies, which means that Government has been very strict. Now that Government has decided to have a look at the system over again, we are going to have a look at it; that's all.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** The old people are still left waiting on the bus stops!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over!

## MOTIONS

### SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, 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 Finance & Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth)** rose and seconded.

*Question put and agreed to.*

### CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ORDERS 2010

**The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr A. K. Gungah):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to move that the two motions standing in my name and relating to the Civil Establishment Orders 2010 be taken together, namely -

*(1) "That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010 be approved".*

*(2) "That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010 be approved".*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 3(1) of the Civil Establishment Act 1981, as subsequently amended, stipulates that the President may, by order –

- (a) establish offices in the public service of Mauritius;
- (b) determine the number of persons to be appointed to such offices, and
- (c) determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 reflects the changes on the approved establishments of Ministries and Departments for Financial Year 2010. The Civil Establishment

(Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 reflects changes on the approved Establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Financial Year 2010.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 are, therefore, now submitted for approval by the National Assembly.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the two motions to the House.

**Dr. Jeetah rose and seconded**

**The Deputy Speaker:** I take it that there is no dissenting voice regarding both motions being taken together. The question is that this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Amendment) Order 2010 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) (Amendment) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 30 March 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 30 March 2010 be approved.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*At 4.20 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 4.52 p.m. with Mr 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”.*

**The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mrs S. Hanoomanjee):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish first of all to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House. I have witnessed, for the past five years, the way you chair the deliberations of this august Assembly, and I can only congratulate you for your professionalism and your impartiality.

M. le président, c'est avec beaucoup de fierté que je m'adresse à la Chambre sur le discours-programme du nouveau gouvernement PTR-PMSD-MSM, que le peuple a plébiscité dans sa sagesse et sa maturité.

Je dis que je suis fière pour deux raisons :

Premièrement, je suis honorée de faire partie de l'équipe gouvernementale bleu-blanc-rouge, deuxième génération, qui a été concrétisée sur la base de la confiance, de la sincérité, et d'une volonté farouche pour servir le pays et le peuple, en vue de marquer de son empreinte l'île Maurice moderne de l'avenir. Et là, je profite de l'occasion pour remercier le Premier ministre ainsi que mon leader, le vice-premier ministre et ministre des finances, pour la confiance qu'ils ont placée en moi. Je peux d'ores et déjà assurer la Chambre que je compte assumer mes fonctions de ministre de la santé avec toute l'énergie, le professionnalisme et la compétence qui ont marqué ma carrière en tant que fonctionnaire de l'Etat.

Deuxièmement, je suis fière de la vision de la nouvelle Ile Maurice que ce nouveau gouvernement bleu-blanc-rouge veut réaliser, en partenariat avec le peuple et les différents *stakeholders*, afin que notre pays puisse faire un bond vers la modernité, tout en préservant nos atouts environnementaux, qu'il y ait davantage de création de richesse, qu'il y ait des opportunités pour tous et, qu'ensemble, comme une nation unie et ambitieuse, nous devenions une nouvelle fois un exemple cité à travers le monde en matière de développement socio-économique.

Au sein du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, nous avons pris le pari de relever de gros défis dans l'intérêt du pays et du peuple. M. le président il n'est plus question de parti. Il y a certains qui disent que nous ne sommes pas à l'aise au sein du gouvernement. Mais, il y a une équipe bleu-blanc-rouge homogène, avec un leadership fort, des leaders déterminés, regardant dans une seule direction, et un programme réfléchi, avant-gardiste, réaliste et réalisable. Je n'ai absolument aucun doute que, dans la solidarité et en travaillant dur, nous allons relever les défis présents et ceux qui se présenteront en cours de route au cours des cinq prochaines années. L'Alliance de l'Avenir a la capacité de réaliser ce rêve de consolidation de l'unité, le partage, un nouveau pays.

Le discours-programme du gouvernement énonce les différents chantiers et champs d'action des années à venir. Le gouvernement prend des engagements, et nous nous attèlerons à honorer ces engagements, quitte à travailler nuit et jour au sein de nos ministères respectifs, pour atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés.

Les grands axes de l'action gouvernementale se résument ainsi :

Tout d'abord innover, et quand nous parlons d'innovation, c'est remodeler le paysage économique autour des projets infrastructurels d'envergure, à la fois modernes et écologiques, cadrant avec le projet de transformer l'île Maurice en une *'Duty-Free Island'*. Et là, M. le président, quand nous parlons de *'Duty-Free Island'*, il ne s'agit pas tout simplement ou seulement d'élimination des tarifs douaniers, comme le prétendent certains donneurs de leçons dans les milieux passésistes. Il est question d'un pilier économique à part entière, offrant de nouvelles avenues de business, de commerce, d'entrepreneuriat, de nouvelles opportunités pour tous nos compatriotes.

Deuxièmement, démocratiser l'économie, pour que l'opportunité soit offerte à tous les mauriciens, et même aux étrangers, d'investir dans le pays, et à faire grossir le gâteau national. En même temps, démocratiser pour que les travailleurs qui produisent la richesse dans le pays puissent devenir partenaires dans leurs entreprises respectives, au lieu d'être considérés au même titre que des outils de production. La proposition de mise sur pied d'un *'Tourism and Hotel Investment Trust'* va dans cette direction. Démocratiser aussi pour faire participer les travailleurs dans les projets de développement fonciers et immobiliers et, là, je suis heureuse que l'*Employees Real Estate Investment Trust* soit redynamisé pour atteindre ces objectifs.

Troisièmement, assurer un juste équilibre entre l'économie et le social. Car, pour nous, dans ce gouvernement bleu-blanc-rouge, nous estimons que l'économie doit être au service du pays et du peuple, et non au service des tout-puissants uniquement.

Quatrièmement, soutenir les groupes vulnérables de notre société et, dans ce contexte, je salue le Premier ministre pour sa décision de créer un ministère spécifique pour combattre la pauvreté.

Cinquièmement, développer et former nos ressources humaines en fonction des besoins du pays en matière de main-d'œuvre, pour atteindre nos objectifs de développement.

Sixièmement, améliorer les différents services offerts à la population ; les services de santé, de logement, d'éducation, de tout-à-l'égout, et j'en passe, M. le président.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have noted reactions from several quarters, which appeared in the press, on the President's address, and I can without hesitation say that most of them are positive. I will quote some of them -

Radhakrishna Sadien, président de la *State Employees Federation (SEF)* –

« Le discours-programme du gouvernement PTR-PMSD-MSM, dans son ensemble, est positif. Il donne à la population et au pays un bon signal. Concernant les mesures économiques à visage humain, les promesses faites durant la campagne électorale ont été prises en compte dans le discours-programme. »

« Le Matinal » -

« Le discours-programme présenté par Sir Anerood Jugnauth, mardi dernier est incontestablement truffé de bonnes intentions. A quelques exceptions près, et comme il fallait s’y attendre, ce programme gouvernemental est une copie conforme du manifeste électoral de l’Alliance de l’Avenir. C’est un projet de société qui a le potentiel de transformer le pays en une nation phare. »

Lindsay Rivière de « *Business Magazine* » –

« Le gouvernement avec le discours-programme 2010/2015 a fait d’importants choix et ouvert de grands chantiers. Le régime a acquis, le mois dernier, une pleine légitimité populaire pour faire avancer ses principales propositions. Il est, donc, essentiel, que le pays, dans toutes ses composantes, lui donne loyalement la chance de le faire, en jouant le jeu dans les limites de la divergence démocratique et en respectant le verdict des urnes. »

Rashid Imrith, président de la *Government General Services Union* –

« Nous accueillons favorablement le démantèlement du *National Pay Council*. »

Par contre, M. le président, j’ai lu dans la presse que le *Leader* de l’opposition se dit « choqué » que le nouveau gouvernement vient de l’avant avec des projets, comme celui du métro léger. Je ne trouve rien qui justifie ce ‘choc’, dans la mesure où les conditions sont maintenant réunies pour que certains projets puissent être reconsidérés et implémentés dans l’intérêt du pays.

Le même argument s’applique aux accusations de volte-face faites par le *Leader* de l’opposition. Si l’opposition dit que certains projets qui reviennent à l’avant-plan maintenant sont bons pour le pays, et qu’elle est d’accord que l’on aille de l’avant, elle devrait s’en réjouir au lieu de critiquer juste pour le besoin de critiquer. Faire de l’opposition, c’est surtout opérer dans

l'intérêt du pays et non pas, coûte que coûte, passer des commentaires rien que pour satisfaire son ego. Je peux, néanmoins, comprendre le 'choc' évoqué par le *Leader* de l'opposition. Il vit mal le 'choc' de la défaite du MMM aux dernières élections générales.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the other day, I heard hon. Ganoo saying that, on the other side of the House, they will be an *opposition constructive*. I wish to ask the hon. Member what sort of *opposition constructive* they will make. When we were in the Opposition, and hon. Jugnauth joined us in March, he stated that the MSM will be an *opposition constructive*. We were criticised then.

*(Interruptions)*

Loyal, we never said! We said that we would be an *opposition constructive*. What difference do you make between an *opposition constructive* and an *opposition loyale*? Can anybody tell me the difference? I hope somebody will come and say what that difference is! We were criticised then, and the MMM and certain sections of the press distorted the real meaning of *opposition constructive*, so as to make people believe that we would sit in the Opposition but act as if we were in Government. That was what they said when we said we would be an *opposition constructive*. And now, I would like to see what sort of Opposition they will make - *opposition constructive*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, when hon. Jugnauth said that we would make an *opposition constructive*, he was giving the words its true meaning.

He was saying that we would not be demagogical. We would criticise, yes; and we did criticise, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not because I am on this side of the House that I would say that we didn't criticise. We did criticise, but the difference is that we also made proposals. That is the difference, and that is what we did, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is what makes the whole difference between the MSM and the MMM.

M. le président, bien que de ce côté de la Chambre nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec bon nombre d'opinions, critiques et observations faites par les membres de l'opposition, nous sommes pour un profond respect du jeu démocratique et parlementaire, tel que pratiqué à Maurice depuis des décennies.

Cela dit, nous ne pouvons ne pas déplorer et condamner fortement l'absence de cette même opposition et de son *Leader*, lors de la lecture du discours-programme 2010 de ce gouvernement issu des élections générales du 05 mai, discours lu par le Président de la République, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, mardi d'avant, au Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall.

L'opposition MMM-Union Nationale-MMSD a, en effet, brillé par son absence pour cet exercice hautement démocratique, conformément à nos pratiques parlementaire traditionnelles. Et l'opposition ne s'est pas gênée pour annoncer, bien avant, son intention de ne pas être présente lors du discours-programme. C'était donc, M. le président, une action délibérée et bien préméditée, dans l'espoir peut-être de récolter quelques sympathies ça et là. Mais cette recette ne marche plus. C'est regrettable, M. le président.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Je fais référence, ici, au discours de l'honorable Ganoo, mardi dernier, quand il a parlé du caractère irrégulier des élections. Ils s'acharnent à agir comme des mauvais perdants à la suite des récentes élections qui ont donné la victoire à l'Alliance de l'Avenir - une victoire nette et sans appel, claire, et remplie de promesses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having said this, you will have noted that the speech of the President has given the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life a good share of responsibilities. The Government Programme 2010-2015 translates Government's vision for a democratised economy and the transformation of our country into a society of equal opportunities, based on the values of equity, unity and modernity.

The programme builds upon the progress and achievements of the past five years. It is a programme based on social justice, equity and solidarity, which paves the way for Mauritius to be more prosperous, and which will build a brighter future for the next generation.

As I just said, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has placed health at the top of its agenda for the period 2010-2015. Government firmly believes that a healthy population remains the cornerstone of a productive labour force. Government continues to provide health services, free of any user cost, to the entire population. For the current financial year, Government's

expenditure on health is Rs7.4 billion. This amount represents 2.7% of our Gross Domestic Product and 9.1% of total Government's expenditure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to stress here that whilst there are health programmes, which involve heavy financial implications, there are yet many others which can be undertaken to improve the quality of service and quality of life of patients at a very low cost or no cost at all.

I am thinking, for example, of patients who have to wait for long hours at hospitals to receive a specialised service. It is unacceptable that all patients are given appointment at only one time, either at 9.00 a.m or 1.00 p.m, and they may have to wait for two hours or more before being seen by a specialist. This situation has been creating much inconvenience to patients.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have now introduced a 'staggered hours appointment schedule' in hospitals, and I can say that it is already proving its efficiency where it is operational.

I must add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that to make this new concept of staggered hours appointment effective and efficient, no investment is required. The only two major actions required are -

- a redeployment of health personnel to cater more for hospitals where there is a lot of pressure, and
- the collaboration and cooperation of the public - the patients and their families - to attend their appointment in time.

This concept, Mr Speaker, Sir, will have several advantages, such as -

- (i) it will reduce congestion and waiting time of patients at hospitals;
- (ii) it will not be necessary for a patient to absent himself or herself to attend an appointment. Usually, they spend a whole day at the hospital and they have to absent themselves from work.
- (iii) the pressure on the transport service also, especially at peak hours, between 7 a.m. and 10.30 a.m., will be reduced.

I am, therefore, proposing, Mr Speaker, Sir, to start with a full sensitisation campaign soon to inform patients how the whole system will work.

Concurrently, I am reviewing the customer care at hospital and health centres.

It is well known that the first contact of a patient with a health service point is a determining element in the perceived quality of care and the public image of the service. In this respect, it is important to groom all health personnel in the correct interfacing with patients.

We will, therefore, expand and consolidate our ongoing intensive training programme in customer care and skills development for all health personnel, with focus particularly on customer care, leadership and supervision. We hope that this programme will bring about the necessary behavioural change and adoption of a new mindset, with a focus on patients' satisfaction at all levels of contact in the health service.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a major area of concern is the alleged cases of medical negligence, which are pending before the Medical Council. I think it was only last week that the Opposition came with a Parliamentary Question on this issue. Very often, the Medical Council has been criticised and referred to as a bulldog *sans dent*. There are some justifications in these criticisms, as the Council has not been able to take disciplinary actions against medical practitioners in the public service because of certain legal impediments. In fact, the Medical Council does not have the right to take action as at now against public officers. So, we are waiting for a delegation of power from the PSC to the Medical Council to make this happen, and we will be able to clear around 48 to 50 cases where there has been medical negligence.

In fact, I already have had a meeting with the Attorney General and the Medical Council to address this matter urgently.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another important measure on which I wish to lay emphasis is preventive health, which I consider is an important aspect of quality of life. I wish to stress here that Government is committed to improve the quality of life of all citizens, and also to protect our future generations from all preventable diseases. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is indeed amazing to note that in a country like ours, where our economic indicators are considered to be comparable to those of developed countries, yet the prevalence of preventable and non-communicable diseases is alarming. This is due to a large extent to the lifestyle, in particular the physical inactivity and the unhealthy eating patterns of our population.

In this context, I am proposing to review our strategies regarding food consumption and physical activity, and also to introduce innovative measures. These will include –

- An ongoing national sensitisation campaign with the support of the media and the private sector, not only to inform people about healthy lifestyles but also to ensure that our legislative framework regarding sale and consumption of food items is being complied with.
- The setting up of a Nutrition Surveillance System to particularly control advertisement of food items, as well as information given by other means on food items to the public at large.
- A training programme, which has already started for school canteen operators – that had been started by my predecessor - will be extended to all food handlers. The actual food handlers training conducted by the Health Inspectorate Cadre will be reviewed, so as to create a food safety culture among all food vendors and operators. Mr Speaker, Sir, food hygiene will not only be said to be enforced, but also seen to be applied as part of the daily life of one and all.
- Emphasis will be laid on bringing behavioural changes through education, counselling and enforcement actions, to ensure that basic personal hygiene such as wearing of caps, aprons, overalls, holding of food with tongs and pliers and using disposable gloves is being strictly observed in accordance with the Food Act and Food Regulations. Very often, we see people in the streets selling and serving food with their hands while, at the same time, handling money altogether.
- A ‘Parenting Education Programme’ on ‘Eat Healthily and Practise Physical Exercises’ will be conducted in educational institutions and in social, welfare, community and woman centres, with the collaboration of my colleagues, the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Minister of Education and Human Resources.
- Additional health clubs and health tracks will be set up all throughout Mauritius, to ensure that adequate infrastructural facilities are available to perform physical exercises regularly. This will be carried out in collaboration with my colleagues, the Minister of Youth and Sports, the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands and support from the National Development Unit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our health indicators concerning respectively under five mortality rate, maternal mortality rate and HIV and AIDS are already the best in the region. However, our ambition is to reach developed countries standard. In order to do so, we have to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely reduction of under five mortality rate by two thirds of the 1990 level by 2015, and reduction of the maternal mortality rate by three quarters by 2015 from its 1990 level.

As far as HIV/AIDS is concerned, we have already reached the goal of halting its progression and we are beginning to reverse the trend.

However, we don't want to be complacent. We want to further enhance the health of each and every citizen of this country with specialised services for specific target groups. Mr Speaker, Sir, women are the pillars of any society and the primary custodians of its future generations. Women, by the very fact that they give birth, are prone to certain diseases which are specific to them, and which require care and treatment of a specific nature. Government has included in its programme a specialised institute for women's health.

This state-of-the-art institute for women's health has been overwhelmingly acclaimed by the population. The hon. Prime Minister wishes this institute to become a centre of excellence, which will provide our women folk with all facilities of preventive and curative health services.

In fact, it was on the personal initiative of the hon. Prime Minister that the University College of London will provide technical support for the realisation of this ambitious project. This institute will act as a Tertiary Referral Centre, to provide a package of high quality services to women; amongst others, facilities for the treatment of gynaecological and breast cancer, an Intensive Care Unit for women, a Colposcopy Unit for screening and treatment of precancerous conditions of the cervix, and the provision of centralised mammography and cervical screening services for the early detection of breast and cervical cancers. It will also provide clinical training to medical and paramedical personnel, including postgraduate students.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the same breath, we will be setting up a geriatric hospital. This project has become a priority, as our people are living longer now due to better conditions of living and better health services. In fact, for the period 1973 to 2009, life expectancy at birth has increased by eight years for males, from 61.0 to 69.3, and by 10 years for females, from 66.1 to 76.5. It is expected that, by year 2030, life expectancy will increase to 73 and 79 years

respectively for men and women. People in Mauritius aged 65 years and above numbered 86,382 in 2008. By 2030, this number will more than double, to around 200,000. It is also estimated that the number of individuals older than 85 years is likely to triple in the next 30 to 40 years. The 65 and 65+ population currently accounts for more than 40% of the occupied bed days in the public health institutions. These trends will place increasing demands on the five existing regional hospitals and other specialised health institutions.

In addition, geriatric patients have complex problems and multiple disorders that need long term treatment in the most caring way. They often respond differently to standard medication and treatments and require more vigilant care. This type of clinical care and treatment is normally provided in a specialised, conducive and nurturing environment. For these reasons, Mr Speaker, Sir, the sooner the project can materialise, the better for our elderly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after women and the elderly, Government has also thought of children. We shall leave no stone unturned to tackle the common diseases of childhood. In fact, there are certain specific conditions affecting our children, for example, blood disorders like anaemia and cancer; congenital malformations of the alimentary and respiratory system, and cardiac anomalies. Several of these complex cases are currently being sent abroad for treatment at enormous and increasingly prohibitive costs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have set up a high level technical committee to make proposals about the specific services to be provided by the geriatric and paediatric hospitals. At the same time, I have set up a Project Monitoring Unit at the level of my Ministry for a timely implementation of all major projects.

At this stage, I would wish to point out that, once these projects will be completed and the new services will be fully operational, this will help to reduce the congestion at our regional hospitals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is known that facilities for performing operations exist, but with the introduction of new high-tech medicine in our hospitals and the need for more and more patients to undergo surgery, these facilities have become inadequate. Government has immediately reacted to this situation, and a three-storeyed building is being constructed at Victoria Hospital to accommodate the following -

- an Intensive Care Unit and two emergency operation theatres on the ground floor;
- four operation theatres on the first floor, and
- wards to accommodate a total of 134 patients' beds on the second and third floors.

The project is estimated at Rs270 m., and will be financed by the Chinese Government. Works are expected to start in early January 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the workload at the Central Health Laboratory has increased tremendously over the years. Some 7.6 million tests, covering a range of approximately 250 different types of tests are carried out annually in all hospital laboratories. The Central Health Laboratory alone caters for nearly 50% of this workload and is stretched to capacity. This is because of greater consciousness among the population, which is leading to more tests being requested by the medical health practitioners from both public and private sectors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to cope with this situation, a modern state-of-the-art National Health Laboratory Services will be built, bringing under one roof various laboratory stakeholders.

The new National Health Laboratory Services will be a one-stop shop in providing an essential and integrated Public Health Laboratory Service. It will also aim at protecting the health of the nation against emerging and re-emerging diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, AH1N1 and Dengue. It will also be a National Reference Laboratory to support NCD programs and new disciplines like immunology, genetic testing and bioinformatics.

Medical equipment is one of the key components of the health care delivery system. Government is, therefore, investing massively in the acquisition of new state-of-the-art equipment. However, in spite of such investments, there have been many criticisms regarding frequent breakdown of equipment and the long down time for repairs. Indeed, it is a fact that some equipment remain out of order for quite some time. We cannot deny this fact. But the main reason is that there is a lack of expertise in maintenance of biomedical equipment both in the public and private sectors. For many years now, it has not been possible to fill the posts of Biomedical Engineer, as there are no qualified candidates. At present, the Ministry has only one Biomedical Engineer on contract to look after equipment of all hospitals in Mauritius as well as Rodrigues.

On the other hand, although the Ministry is contracting out maintenance and repairs of some equipment, it is not obtaining an appropriate service from private contractors. The local firms are mere agents of overseas manufacturers and are unable to provide an adequate after sales service, both for preventive and corrective maintenance of equipment. Consequently, there is a long delay before the equipment is ready for use after repairs. In order to remedy the above situation, the following measures are being implemented –

- The present schemes of service of Biomedical Engineer and Biomedical Engineering Technicians are being reviewed with a view to facilitating the recruitment of adequate technical staff to man the Biomedical Unit.
- Appropriate training will be imparted to all staff, to equip them with the necessary know-how and skills to undertake maintenance and repairs of essential equipment.
- All clauses of maintenance contracts are being reviewed to include appropriate penalty clauses, to ensure that private companies attend to repairs of equipment within a reasonable period of time; otherwise, penalty will be applied against them.
- A special committee at the level of the Ministry is looking into the issue to ensure that a proper Biomedical Unit is set up for the management of biomedical equipment of the hospitals from its inception, acquisition, commissioning and maintenance during its whole life time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since its inception, the Cardiac Centre has been the only institution performing cardiac surgeries in Mauritius. Recently, some cardiac surgeries are still being performed in private clinics. However, I should point out that almost all Mauritian patients, belonging to all cross sections of the population, choose to be operated at the Cardiac Centre because of the high quality of service that it offers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will provide all support to the Cardiac Centre to enable it to maintain its level, and subsequently upgrade and expand its services to operate as a centre of excellence for the region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish also to inform the House that my Ministry has been approached by the '*Association France Coeur Maurice*', which is a non-governmental organisation operating

in the field of cardiology, to set up an Institute of Cardiology in Mauritius. It will offer a range of highly specialised services for complex cases, such as treatment of rhythm disorders, from complementing our existing cardiology services. Through its proposed linkage with the *Hôpital Pitié-Salpêtrière* in Paris, the Institute will function as a university hospital, catering for cardiac patients in Mauritius and the Indian Ocean region, and provide for certified training of staff. I should say that this project is a prestigious one, because these people are coming with their money to put up this Cardiac Centre in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has, over the years, adopted a concept of bringing health services to people in their respective towns and villages through a network of health centres. Many of those health centres badly need renovation, whilst others need to be pulled down completely to respond to the changing needs of the population. I think, only last week, hon. Labelle had a parliamentary question on this issue, and I said that we would look into the possibilities of renovating or pulling down the health centres.

I have requested that a survey of all these centres be carried out, so as to come up with a Master Plan to upgrade and reinforce the first points of contact of the health care delivery system. The medi-clinic concept will be used to upgrade the services provided at health care centres. In the first instance, ultra sound will be made available at the area health centres for antenatal follow-up by gynaecologists. This is a measure which is being implemented now, because I find it ridiculous that women are following antenatal treatment at the area health centres, but have to come to hospital for echography services.

On Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Mr Speaker, Sir, globally they are taking alarming proportions and represent a leading threat to human health and development, being responsible for 60% of all deaths. NCDs usually result from decades of unhealthy lifestyles. Mauritius has, unfortunately, not been spared by the NCDs, which are now a major public health concern.

In 2009 alone, more than 1 billion cigarettes and more than 13 million litres of spirits have been consumed by the Mauritian population, representing more than Rs13 billion. Our NCD survey 2009 reveals that only 16.5% of adults undertake sufficient physical activity.

Unhealthy lifestyles, as evidenced by these figures, over decades, have resulted in an explosion of NCDs. According to the NCD survey 2009, 23.7% of the population has Type 2

diabetes. In 2009, cancers accounted for 12.1% of deaths, and were responsible for nearly 35% of diseases of the circulatory system. A number of action plans to deal with the NCDs, in line with WHO recommendations, are being implemented. However, my Ministry alone will not be able to bring an in-depth change in the lifestyle of the population at large, in order to address the NCDs problem and its root causes. I will, therefore, need the collaboration of all Ministries, non-governmental organisations, the population at large and other stakeholders in order to succeed in the battle against the NCDs.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to highlight some major actions which are planned. The ongoing multi-media campaign to inform the public at large of the risk factors for the NCDs and to advise the population about healthy living will be intensified. In this context, a media campaign on trans-fatty acids is soon to be carried out. The diabetes services will be reorganised, and a major capacity building exercise for all health personnel dealing with diabetes will be carried out at the Diabetes and Vascular Health Centre at the Souillac Hospital. Furthermore, a National Computerised Register for diabetes will be put in place.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to cancer statistics, each year, the number of female deaths related to cancer is around 500. 25% of these cases account for women affected by breast cancer. This has become a major cause of concern. Early detection and diagnosis of breast cancer will definitely improve outcomes. In this perspective, my Ministry is purchasing two new Digital Mammography machines at the approximate cost of Rs20 m. A protocol will be developed towards the target age group of women who will be screened. Moreover, through mobile clinics over the next five years, we would be targeting about 500,000 persons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, prevention and treatment are two essential and reinforcing components of successful strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention and impact mitigation. I am glad to say that HIV/AIDS is seen as a national issue now, and several NGOs, as well as people '*de bonne volonté*', are all giving a helping hand to fight this disease.

My Ministry will reinforce its fight against stigmatisation and discrimination, as these deter people suffering from HIV to use our services. To further strengthen the services being offered by my Ministry, I am proposing the following measures -

- The services of the National Day Care Centre for the treatment and care of HIV patients, which are at present available at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital and Victoria Hospital, will be further decentralised to other regional hospitals.
- To make services relating to HIV and AIDS more accessible to people living with HIV and AIDS, curative outpatient care will be extended in other hospitals.
- A comprehensive psychosocial package manual for health care workers, to further enhance the management of people living with HIV and AIDS will be developed as a matter of priority.
- Discriminating policies within the clauses of the HIV and AIDS legislation 2006 will be revisited, to further safeguard the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS and affected families.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the implementation of Harm Reduction Strategies has indeed proved to be beneficial in our fight against HIV and AIDS. I must also add here that these strategies have also yielded favourable results at national level. For example, they have largely contributed towards bringing down the number of thefts, as well as the criminality rate in Mauritius. In fact, as at May 2010, 2,655 injecting drug users were already induced under the Methadone Substitution Therapy.

The plan is to reach some 3,000 persons by the end of this year. This therapy has had several positive results, including the rehabilitation of drug abusers in the mainstream of life.

I am indeed pleased, at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, to state that a respondent driven survey, carried out by my Ministry last year, has revised downwards the estimate of the number of injecting drug users to about 10,000 from about 20,000. The other Harm Reduction Strategy is the Needle Exchange Programme, under which my Ministry and the NGOs are altogether reaching some 6,000 injecting drug users. This programme has also given positive result, and it will be scaled up so as to reach 8,000 drug users by 2013.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the firm commitment of the Government to develop health care and life sciences as a strong pillar of the economy. The setting up of an upmarket medical tourism industry is underway. Our country is presently providing advanced care and treatment to foreign patients in fields such as hair grafting, in-vitro fertilisation, ayurvedic therapy and aromatherapy, to name but a few. In 2008, some 2,500 overseas patients visited our country for various medical

and aesthetic cares. Taking into consideration the expanding tourist industry, we are aiming to target a much larger number of foreign patients visiting Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in keeping with the objectives of Government to innovate and modernise public sector services, my Ministry has already embarked on the computerisation of the health services, which will be implemented in a phased manner during the next five years. The computerisation of the health delivery services will definitely revolutionise and dynamise the way our services operate.

As a result, all information, including statistics generated to build up the data bank, will be available to all stakeholders and patients. This will ease accessibility and traceability of patients' records at any health point and at any given time, thus reducing the burden to keep hard copies of records, which are cumbersome and costly. Further, inventory and stock management, particularly for pharmaceutical products, will be better controlled and monitored to ensure their availability at hand in a cost-effective way at any time. This will ensure, on the one hand, that there is no shortage of all drugs and, on the other hand, will avoid wastage due to expiry of drugs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our new vision for health speaks for itself. We are looking ahead with renewed confidence that the country should have healthy citizens. This is why much emphasis is being laid on the preventive side, notwithstanding the fact that, for those unfortunate cases requiring treatment and care, high-tech technologies will be introduced and extended in all regions.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would remind the House of WHO's definition of health, namely that -

'Health is not merely the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.'

Indeed, as the adage goes, health is our true wealth, and we do not need any excuse for investing massively in the health of our population.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before resuming my seat, I wish to thank all my constituents for the trust they have placed in me and, without going into the details of projects, which I have in mind for

my constituency, I wish to tell my constituents that, at the end of this mandate, Constituency No. 14 will be totally transformed.

I have listened to hon. Ganoo the other day; he mentioned a list of things which have to be done for the constituency. I had myself raised the question while I was in the Opposition. Now, that I am in Government, I'll see to it that these projects are being, in fact, implemented.

*M. le président, cette équipe gouvernementale bleu-blanc-rouge marquera de son empreinte une île Maurice moderne.* This team, Mr Speaker, Sir, will not be here for five years only. This team will be here for much beyond; 10 or 15 years. We will see, at the end of the 15 years, where the Opposition will be.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.45 p.m)

**Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière):** I have listened with much attention to our good friend, the hon. lady, but in politics we should never say we will be here for 100 years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is why I always say to my new friends, once they are elected and get a second mandate, to go and thank God that they have come back a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, first, before coming *à l'essentiel, permettez-moi de vous féliciter*, as well as the Deputy Speaker, my friends who have returned here after the general election, and our new Members. As far as your election is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been working with you for the past years; we know you since very long, and we have had tough times. You can count on my collaboration, because I have been assigned the responsibility of Opposition Whip, as was the case before the general election. I shall try to give my support to the Government Whip, to you and your staff for the good running of the affairs of the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is with great honour that I am standing here this late afternoon. To tell you frankly, I am a fan of football, but I am not a fan of the French team. So, I'll take my time to make my speech.

*(Interruptions)*

Je suis très allergique au bleu-blanc-rouge ; *better be frank*.

M. le président, j'ai l'honneur et le privilège encore une fois - la septième, si je ne me trompe - de prendre la parole sur un discours-programme après une élection générale. Je me souviens de ma première élection à l'Assemblée nationale en 1983, et on lisait le discours-programme dans le salon. C'était un grand jour. *It was the first time I was elected Member of Parliament, and an advice was given to me by an old-timer*. Nous assumons la responsabilité de députés, nous sommes des honorables membres de l'Assemblée nationale, du Conseil législatif. Quelles sont les règles que nous devons adopter ? Premièrement, être près du peuple ; être quelqu'un de proximité. Deuxièmement, ne pas être arrogant - vous-même ainsi que les membres de votre famille, vos enfants, y compris madame. Troisièmement, tenir parole aux mandants qui vous ont fait élire, d'être à leurs côtés pour développer leur circonscription, d'apporter des solutions à leurs problèmes. En dernier lieu, M. le président, ne pas être communal.

Voilà les principes que j'ai adoptés. J'ai été élu pour la septième fois, M. le président, sans changer de circonscription. Ça fait 27 ans que je suis ici dans cette Chambre. M. le président, cela a été possible grâce à une persévérance et à la confiance de l'électorat de cette circonscription. M. le président, j'ai été au gouvernement ; deux fois ministres ; j'ai été PPS. On a connu des victoires ; on a fait des alliances. Chez moi, j'ai toutes sortes d'affiches, de toutes les couleurs ; tous les symboles. Fort de ces expériences, je le dis sincèrement dans cette assemblée - et je l'ai dit publiquement - que c'est ma dernière élection.

Pour cela, M. le président, je préfère envoyer un message clair aux mandants de cette circonscription, et non pas cacher et attendre la dernière minute. J'ai fait 27 ans. Ce gouvernement dit qu'il va durer 10 ans. Mais moi, je dis cinq ans au moins ; un mandat encore. Le tout est d'assumer cette responsabilité de premier député de Beau Bassin avec honneur, discipline, et la même ardeur avec laquelle j'avais commencé en 1980.

Je dois rendre hommage à mon parti, à mon *Leader*, à mes militants, et au symbole que je représente en tant qu'élu de Beau Bassin. Mais je manquerai à mes devoirs si je ne rendais hommage à mes deux colistiers, mes deux frères, notamment l'honorable Li Kwong Wing et l'honorable France Quirin, qui, je suis sûr, seront deux députés de proximité, et qui vont servir avec moi l'intérêt de cette circonscription avec la même ardeur.

M. le président, cette circonscription de Beau Bassin est une petite Ile Maurice, qui fait partie de la ville de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. Il y a le côté rural qui fait partie du conseil de district de Black River, Petite Rivière, Canot, Gros Cailloux, Albion. Il y a le côté littoral : la plage d'Albion ; c'est une petite Ile Maurice.

M. le président, on parle de développement durable ; moi, j'ai été un député 'durable', et je le serai encore. Je voudrais partager avec vous certaines leçons, certaines observations que j'ai faites durant cette dernière joute électorale. M. le président, depuis 1983, le Premier ministre parle de campagne communale. Il a fait des déclarations ; c'est son droit, c'est légitime. M. le président, je n'aurais jamais cru de ma vie que j'aurais été la cible d'une campagne communale aussi infecte. J'ai côtoyé de grands politiciens; feu Gaëtan Duval, le vice-premier ministre d'alors, a été mon adversaire en 1987; il y a eu Hervé Duval en 1983 ; madame Ghislaine Henry, dont le fils est ici présent aujourd'hui, et Régis Finette. Mais, jamais, M. le président, ces adversaires de l'époque n'ont agi d'une façon aussi communale que le dernier pensionnaire de la bassecour des Bleus - j'éviterai de prononcer son nom.

Dans son désespoir, M. le président, il a vraiment dépassé les bornes en termes d'agissements, à caractère communal, pour tenter de grignoter quelques voix, et il a fini par être dans la poubelle de l'histoire. Sa campagne et sa performance ne peuvent aujourd'hui que m'inspirer de la pitié. J'ai connu beaucoup d'adversaires politiques, dont j'ai fait mention, mais jamais je n'aurais cru que quelqu'un que j'avais fait élire député deux fois - pour venir, ici, dans cette Chambre - aurait fait du porte-à-porte pour faire du communalisme contre ma personne. Il a payé le prix de ses dérives communales.

M. le président, ce n'est pas qu'au No. 20 que cette campagne a été imprégnée de dérives communales inimaginables, et des abus sans précédent. Et c'est cela qui me rends plus fier. Dans ma circonscription de Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, qui est une petite Ile Maurice, les membres de la population générale sont en majorité ; presque 20,000. Et moi, je suis de foi hindoue, et je suis élu en tête de liste. On n'achète pas des votes ; je n'achète jamais des votes. C'est le fruit de mon travail et le respect de l'électorat, de la collaboration de mes deux colistiers et mes militants. Et je souhaite que cela puisse servir de message aux jeunes politiciens.

M. le président, je ne le dis pas avec fanatisme, mais, de par ma politique de proximité, je suis aussi fier qu'un autre. Comme je le dis, j'en suis à mon septième mandat. Je ne suis pas le

seul; l'honorable Ganoo est là depuis 1982 ; il y a aussi l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree et l'honorable Dr. Boolell. Ce sont des gens qui ont duré, et qui vont durer j'en suis sûr. Il y a l'honorable Barbier, ainsi que l'honorable Mme Navarre-Marie qui est candidate depuis 1982 ; elle a été députée de Port Louis depuis 1995, sans interruption. L'honorable Obeegadoo aussi est là depuis assez longtemps. C'est cela qui doit servir de leçon à cette jeune classe de politiciens.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Can I have your indulgence to have your ruling as to whether this is a speech on the Government Programme that we are debating or a speech on scientific communalism?

**Mr Speaker:** I did not get your point.

*(Interruptions)*

It is not a Budget Speech. The hon. Minister has a right to make a point of order, but it is not a point of order. I have given my ruling. Continue your speech, hon. Member!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am making general comments. After a general election, everybody is entitled to make such comments.

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, comme je le disais, la campagne pour les élections a été imprégnée de dérives communales inimaginables et des abus sans précédent de l'appareil de l'État. Ça a été vu, et ça s'est fait, M. le président. Les grands principes énoncés sur le *free and fair election* - omniprésents dans les discours de ceux qui prétendent nous gouverner - ont simplement volé en éclats lors de ces dernières élections.

M. le président, nous nous souviendrons, ici même, au parlement, combien de fois on a posé des questions parlementaires sur le code de conduite. Il y a eu des engagements qui ont été pris par le Premier ministre. J'ai, moi-même, posé deux questions parlementaires. L'honorable Bodha aussi en a posé. Des engagements ont été pris par le Premier ministre pour venir avec un *code of conduct*.

*(Interruptions)*

Précisément ! Un *code of conduct* qui va être un bouledogue sans dent ! Il devait venir avec un *code of conduct*, avec des sanctions, des règles démocratiques qui allaient faire honneur

à une île Maurice moderne. Mais malheureusement, M. le président, tel n'a pas été le cas. Nous avons été bernés, et ceux qui sont censés jouer aux arbitres se sont révélés des eunuques parfaits.

M. le président, quant à la MBC, j'aurai l'occasion d'y revenir plus tard. M. le président, malgré tous ces abus, et les règles du jeu bafouées, les résultats ont été des plus décevants pour les vainqueurs.

*(Interruptions)*

Ils sont en nombre supérieur, M. le président. Sur 100 électeurs, 39 seulement ont voté pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir. Ce sont les faits, ce sont les chiffres ! 33 ont voté pour l'Alliance du Cœur, 6 pour les autres partis et 22 se sont abstenus, M. le président. Venir prétendre que la population a largement plébiscité le gouvernement sortant est une contrevérité ; ce sont les chiffres, ce sont les faits. Et cet aveu de victoire mal acquise se lit facilement, et ils savent qu'ils ne peuvent tirer aucune gloire après un combat dans de telles conditions. Ils ont la majorité ; c'est notre système électoral. Ils sont appelés à diriger le gouvernement. Nous souhaitons bonne chance au pays ! Lorsque nous analysons les résultats comme tels, voilà un peu cette réalité.

Depuis 1987, plusieurs partis - tout le monde - ont archi demandé qu'il y ait une réforme électorale de notre système. En 1991, je crois, le Parti travailliste a souffert de ce système aussi bien que d'autres partis. Ce système doit être changé.

*(Interruptions)*

En 1982 aussi ! C'est le système : 1982, 1983, 1987, 1991. C'est le système *first past the post* et, aujourd'hui, nous avons les résultats que nous avons.

M. le président, certains se préoccupent du devenir du MMM. Je disais à quelqu'un - je crois que c'était à l'honorable Steve Obeegadoo ou à l'honorable Madame Navarre-Marie - à l'heure du déjeuner que nous étions à huit et, aujourd'hui, nous sommes presque une vingtaine. Le MMM a eu 43%, et nous en sommes fiers ; avec ce type de combat et les conditions dans lesquelles les élections ont été organisées. Alors que certains se préoccupent de notre avenir, je fais un appel. Il est plus urgent pour la société civile, et particulièrement ceux qui sont les défenseurs de la démocratie et qui écrivent dans les journaux, de réfléchir sur l'avenir des élections libres et transparentes à l'île Maurice, et de venir avec des propositions, au lieu d'écrire sur le MMM. *Laisse nous guette nous zafer !* N'écrivez pas sur ceux qui ont quitté le MMM en

1972 et en 1973. Nous menons notre combat de façon loyale et fidèle à notre principe, et nous sommes ici aujourd'hui. Nous représentons 43% de la population. Notre objectif est d'augmenter ces 43%, et c'est juste de notre part, M. le président. Nous ne sommes pas arrogants de ces 43%. Ce sont les électeurs et les électrices qui ont voté pour nous, qui ont cru dans notre programme et, aujourd'hui, nous avons ce résultat de 43%. Nous en sommes fiers. M. le président, voilà un peu les faits.

Avant de faire des observations sur le MMM, allez voir chez vous ! Le MMM a la capacité de rebondir. Nous avons connu des défaites ; nous avons connu des victoires et nous avons su rebondir, et nous allons rebondir dans les jours et les années à venir, M. le président. J'en suis sûr.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, nous sommes appelés à discuter, à prendre connaissance et donner nos propositions sur le discours-programme qui a été présenté. Un discours-programme est un discours. En passant, je ne voulais pas répondre à l'honorable Madame Hanoomanjee sur notre absence, mais nous avons publiquement fait savoir le pourquoi de notre absence pour le discours-programme, pourquoi nous avons décidé de boycotter ce discours-programme. Nous ne sommes pas satisfaits de ce qui a été la participation du Président de la République à l'époque - je me retiens ici, M. le président - et sur ses conférences de presse. Nous l'avons dit publiquement et je le redis ici : c'est pour cela que nous n'étions pas présents. Ce n'est pas dit entre quatre murs.

M. le président, le discours-programme, c'est justement un discours avec une cascade d'intentions, parfois vagues, parfois imprécises, sans aucun calendrier de mise en œuvre et sans aucun engagement ferme. En fait, M. le président, nous avons lu le discours-programme précédent, et ce discours-programme est une liste de *unfinished business* de la dernière législature. C'est un *mea culpa* de n'avoir pas tenu parole sur de nombreuses promesses faites durant le précédent discours-programme.

M. le président, si vous épilchez ce discours-programme, vous verrez qu'on a parlé de réforme électorale. Le Premier ministre a pris l'engagement encore une fois. Il y avait cela dans le discours-programme la dernière fois. Il y avait le *Local Government Act* dans le discours-programme. Cela va venir, on va attendre. En ce qui concerne le *Sports Bill*, rien n'a été fait

pendant cinq ans, même pas en première lecture. Même chose en ce qui concerne le logement social, le *drug scourge*, pour ne citer quelques exemples, M. le président.

M. le président, parfois cela me peine de constater un changement de langage par certains qui sont dans l'alliance de l'autre côté. C'est vrai, c'est le système. Il faut être honnête envers soi. S'il y a quelque chose qui a été promis et qui n'a pas été fait, il faut être honnête de dire que cela n'a pas été fait. Il ne faut pas trouver mille excuses.

En ce qui concerne le combat contre la drogue, combien de fois on a débattu de ce problème qu'est le fléau de la drogue ici ; l'affaire subutex qui a rongé notre pays, la corruption à la STC, la fraude et la corruption dans les corps parapublics, les municipalités, les compagnies gérées par l'État, les petits copains par-ci, les petits copains par-là gérant des milliards. Et lorsqu'on vient ici, au parlement, pour demander des réponses, il n'y en a pas, car c'est une compagnie gouvernementale. Peut-on oublier ce qui s'est passé à *Air Mauritius*, M. le président? Les scandales de *hedging* à Air Mauritius, l'achat des avions ! A un certain moment, on parlait même de la vente d'hélicoptères.

Revenant à la STC, M. le président, il y avait la sponsorship des courses à Mumbai *It's on record* ; j'ai posé des questions parlementaires. Je prends l'exemple de la CNT. Le nouveau bâtiment de la CNT est au Cyber City à Ébène. Est-ce qu'il y a quelqu'un dans le nouveau bâtiment de la CNT aujourd'hui ?

*(Interruptions)*

Nous avons peur de cette corporation nationale dont les finances sont dans le rouge. Il y a des intentions dans leur discours-programme, M. le président. Si vous allez dans les rapports, tels que celui du CSO - l'honorable Ms Deerpalsing a parlé du rapport du CSO - vous savez quel blâme sur le gouvernement ! Le *Peer Review*, le rapport de l'Union Africaine et le rapport du *National Economic and Social Council* ont amplement démontré l'accroissement des inégalités, du nombre de pauvres et de l'exclusion jamais vu auparavant, M. le président. Et le gouvernement va dire qu'il a fait un ministère. J'espère que ce ministère ne va pas devenir un dépotoir, comme on a protégé les petits copains à la *Tourism Authority*.

Voilà un peu le constat, M. le président. Tout cela a été discuté, ici, au parlement. Qu'on ne vienne pas nous dire aujourd'hui : *voilà, ine casse gran paké*, on va faire ceci, on va faire

cela. Ce sont les faits. Je ne vais pas parler des consommateurs, M. le président, qui ont été tondu. Combien de lignes y a-t-il dans ce budget sur les consommateurs? Nous allons attendre quand on va cesser de payer les trois roupies sur le *hedging*, le prix des billets d'avion pour nos frères de toutes les communautés qui partent en pèlerinage.

M. le président, c'est par respect pour la démocratie qu'il faut nous dire la vérité. Il faut dire la vérité à la population, et c'est cela que nous attendons de la part des ministres. Ils ont leur programme ; qu'ils viennent nous dire la vérité, avec des *time frame*, et être honnête sur ce qui s'est passé durant les cinq dernières années. Mes amis du MSM, comme l'honorable Madame Hanoomanjee, était dans l'opposition. Elle a fait son travail, elle a posé beaucoup de questions. Peut-on oublier comment elle a été harcelée par les membres du gouvernement d'alors, non pas seulement dans l'enceinte du parlement, mais à l'extérieur ! Elle disait la vérité. Elle faisait état des problèmes. *She was harassed*, M. le président. M. le président, aujourd'hui elle change de langage, parce qu'elle est au gouvernement ; automatiquement elle doit changer.

(*Interruptions*)

Depuis les élections, je vous vois un peu calme. Restez calme!

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, pourquoi venir débattre un discours-programme aujourd'hui, quand, finalement, beaucoup de ce qui est dit sera largement ignoré et violé ? Doit-on s'étonner ensuite que les citoyens, dont nous avons l'honneur de représenter ici, concluent que c'est un exercice artificiel ? Nous n'avons pas été élus, M. le président, pour faire semblant. Nous avons été élus pour *perform*, que ce soit au gouvernement ou dans l'opposition. Nous avons été élus pour qu'il y ait vraiment un développement, pour que ceux qui paient la taxe reçoivent *value for money*, que nous ayons de l'eau - quoique pas vingt-quatre heures -, qu'il n'y ait pas de coupure d'électricité, qu'il n'y ait pas de fraude ou de corruption, que nous voyagions dans des bus convenables et qu'il n'y ait plus ces véhicules fumigènes. Nous sommes appelés, M. le président, à apporter le bien-être à la population.

M. le président, c'est avec ce *mindset* que j'aborderai un sujet auquel, de par mes précédentes fonctions, je suis attaché. C'est le développement durable. On ne peut plus continuer à faire semblant que le développement se résume à l'économie d'énergie, à l'utilisation des

énergies renouvelables, et à la protection de la flore et de la faune. Certes, ce sont des enjeux importants. Le développement durable exige d'abord une nouvelle façon de gouverner, une approche transversale, un décloisonnement des ministères, un *open gouvernement*, plus de transparence, une adhésion aux principes de la subsidiarité. Et quand je parle de transparence, je fais référence aux transactions; ce matin, nous l'avons vu avec 'Infinity'. La transparence du développement durable exige qu'il y ait transparence dans l'allocation des contrats, dans la façon de gouverner.

Le développement durable, M. le président, exige ensuite une approche synergique sur trois fonds : l'économie, l'écologie et le social. Ce sont les trois piliers du développement durable. Expulser les planteurs de Riche Terre, M. le président, qui sont contraints de faire une grève de la faim pour obtenir une compensation, n'est pas le développement durable. Transformer un îlot, une réserve naturelle, en zone de pique-nique, n'est pas le développement durable. Aujourd'hui, l'enfouissement en vrac des déchets n'est pas le développement durable, tout comme une politique de développement qui, en finalité, accroît la pauvreté et les inégalités, ne l'est pas. Un sous-investissement dans les logements sociaux et, surtout, la pandémie des jeux, M. le président - politique *zougadère* - ne le sont pas également. Il faut mettre un terme à ce simulacre de développement durable, car sinon tout le monde finira par n'y trouver qu'un exercice de *repackaging* du même modèle de développement qui a conduit la planète où elle s'est enlisée aujourd'hui, et ce serait grave pour les générations à venir.

M. le président, tout le monde sait que le développement durable est aussi une utilisation optimale des ressources nationales. Tout le monde sait que nos seules ressources sont nos ressources humaines. Commençons par valoriser nos ressources humaines sans distinction de communauté, de caste ou de couleur politique. Laissez le meilleur mauricien ou la meilleure mauricienne gérer Air Mauritius, la STC, la CWA, la Wastewater Authority. Depuis le départ de M. Soonarane, il n'y a pas de directeur général à la Wastewater Authority. *Put the right person*. M. le président, c'est aussi le développement durable ! A ce moment, on jettera les bases pour une île durable et tout le pays sortira gagnant.

M. le président, pendant ces quelques années, nous n'avons vu que des médiocres. La médiocrité est une dette improductive que les futures générations devront rembourser. Dans certains cas, même les conséquences sont irréversibles, parce qu'on met des médiocres à la tête

des institutions qui gèrent des milliards. C'est le pays qui perd. Très souvent, c'est la politique partisane qui passe dans le choix des hommes et des femmes. Nous sommes au début d'un mandat. Le gouvernement du jour est appelé à choisir des hommes et des femmes qui seront appelés à gérer les institutions, et j'espère que le choix du Premier ministre, du gouvernement, de ces hommes et de ces femmes qui vont diriger ces corps parapublics, ces compagnies où le gouvernement est actionnaire, sera fait en termes de compétence. Ils ont un mandat de cinq ans à gérer - je ne dis pas dix ans, comme l'honorable madame Hanoomanjee - et ils doivent choisir les meilleurs. A ce moment, nous donnerons de l'espoir aux jeunes générations. Cessons, M. le président, avec cette approche *short term* qui a fait un tort immense au pays qui perd inutilement des points précieux sur l'échelle de la productivité internationale, parce que justement on piétine sur la méritocratie. Même les jeunes ne veulent plus revenir à Maurice. J'ai deux filles qui sont des professionnelles. Si je leur demande de revenir, reconnaîtra-t-on la méritocratie?

M. le président, évidemment, on ne peut instaurer la méritocratie s'il n'y a pas accès à des chances égales au niveau de l'éducation et de la formation. La politisation des enjeux tant au niveau du maintien de la CPE qu'au niveau du médium d'enseignement est un facteur de notre sous-développement. Le ministre de l'éducation essaie de réparer le mal qui a été causé depuis le départ de mon ami, l'honorable Steve Obeegadoo. Au niveau de l'éducation, il ne faut pas faire de la politique partisane quant au choix des éducateurs et du *policy*, M. le président. C'est cela qui est important. Une réelle politique de développement durable ne peut pas tolérer de telles inepties. Il faut que nous ayons des écoles performantes, un personnel enseignant et non-enseignant motivé.

La motivation est la première des choses au niveau de l'éducation. Il y a l'école de Barkly dans ma circonscription. J'ai soulevé cette question. On ne peut pas dire qu'il y a des problèmes parce que cette école se trouve à Barkly. Il n'y a que deux élèves seulement qui ont réussi la CPE. Il y a aussi la mentalité de certains professeurs. C'est une école qui se trouve dans un endroit difficile ; personne ne veut y aller travailler. Le maître d'école n'est pas motivé ou il ne veut pas être motivé. Je ne porte pas de blâme sur tous les professeurs en général, mais j'ai constaté que, lorsque nous faisons des réunions, ils ne viennent pas. Ce sont des enfants pauvres. Je prends comme exemple Barkly, mais je suis sûr qu'il y a d'autres régions. L'éducation est quelque chose de très importante dans la formation.

M. le président, dans ce contexte, ne sous-estimons pas le rôle catalyseur que peut et que doit jouer une véritable station nationale de radiotélévision. Je ne parle pas de cette boîte actuelle. Même certains membres du gouvernement ne regardent plus la télévision nationale. C'est une boîte qui ferait pâlir Kim Sung II. La MBC, M. le président, est aujourd'hui aux antipodes des objectifs d'une véritable station nationale. Elle est devenue, M. le président, aujourd'hui, le principal instrument d'abêtissement et d'assujettissement de la population. La population paie des redevances de presque R 40 millions par mois.

M. le président, certains qui ont reçu des pas géométriques dans certains endroits - je dis certains - sont aujourd'hui à la tête de la MBC, et ont surpassé l'art de la manipulation. La campagne électorale est un fait. J'ai vécu cette campagne électorale. Ce n'est pas la première ; j'ai été responsable de plusieurs campagnes électorales depuis 1983, et la façon dont cette campagne a été gérée est une honte: manipulation d'images, où le mauve devient bleu. Je peux faire circuler tous les CDs. M. le président, il y a eu manipulation d'images le jour où j'ai donné mon intervention. La personne dont je suis en train de parler était dans la cabine, mais il ne m'a pas vu et moi aussi je suis quelqu'un de rapide. L'espion était dans la cabine ; il était venu pour épier et manipuler les enregistrements politiques, contrairement aux règles des élections. Tout cela est illégal. *Pas bizin dire ou, M. le président, mo fine faire li galoper !*

*(Interruptions)*

Je reviens sur le film *Lagaan* que la MBC a joué la dernière semaine, dans le but de soulever l'émotion ! Comment oublier !

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, aujourd'hui, la MBC est devenue une honte nationale. Est-ce que vous voyez le directeur général de la BBC, de *All India Radio*, de TV1, TV5, venir, chaque mardi, s'asseoir au parlement écouter les questions parlementaires ? C'est sans précédent. C'est du jamais vu ! Vous savez pourquoi, M. le président ? Ce monsieur a dans ses tiroirs des dizaines de ciseaux. Il vient ici, et le soir c'est la manipulation à la télévision. Depuis des années nous demandons qu'il y ait une retransmission directe des débats. Le Premier ministre a dit oui, mais *Anne, ma sœur Anne, Select Committee* ; on va attendre. On parle de l'élargissement de la démocratie. C'est cela l'élargissement de la démocratie. Ce n'est pas seulement à la télévision, mais à la radio aussi. Aujourd'hui, il y a la radio libre. Le peuple de l'île Maurice a le droit moral

de voir et d'entendre leurs élus parler au parlement. S'ils viennent s'asseoir ici *gounga*, mais *ranne casse* ! Ne prenez pas la paye ! Vous êtes payés pour venir au parlement, pour parler et soulever des questions dans l'intérêt de la population. Vous ne pouvez pas venir vous asseoir, bâiller, dormir, et avoir un *allowance* de presque R 100,000 et des voitures hors taxe, des voitures de l'Etat !

M. le président, que dit le discours-programme ? C'est le même son de cloche!

*"Government will ensure that, as a national broadcasting service, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation continues to cater for the intellectual, cultural, information and entertainment needs of its audience(..)"*

Bon programme, M. le président ! Mais, aujourd'hui, qu'est-ce qui se passe à cette station nationale ? J'ai soulevé pas mal de questions. Je n'ai aucune animosité envers qui que ce soit, mais nous payons tous. Savez-vous ce qui se passe à l'intérieur de cette boîte qui est devenue un dépotoir politique ? Il y a des gens qui ont été recrutés sous contrat, et selon les *whims and caprices of the person in question*, des gens ont été aussi mis la porte. Il y a de la manipulation. Il y a une personne qui a reçu R 50,000 à R 60,000 d'*overtime*, parce qu'il est un parent proche de monsieur X ! C'est un fait ! Je dois déposer les questions parlementaires de mon ami, l'honorable Jhugroo. Il y a aussi le scandale du Pepsi Hangama. Aujourd'hui, il y a un *hangama* à la MBC ; il y a une politique de terreur. Les téléphones internes sont sur écoute. On fait de l'espionnage à la MBC. Les travailleurs intègres, les professionnels sont dégoûtés. Il y du copinage. Et le *Board* !

Je rends hommage à feu Monsieur Jangeerkhan. Il a été un travailliste, et il est resté travailliste jusqu'à sa mort. Je le respecte, parce qu'il était un ardent partisan du Parti travailliste, et il était un professionnel. Je n'étais pas toujours d'accord avec lui. Mais la façon dont le *Board* de la MBC l'a traité jusqu'à sa mort, M. le président, n'est pas correcte. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails. Il n'avait plus accès au bureau. Le Premier Ministre a accepté, ce matin, que le *Board* est dans l'inégalité et n'a pas siégé selon les prévisions de la loi. Et c'est celui qui est à la tête de cette administration qu'on va mettre dans le nouveau bâtiment ! Là aussi il y a des problèmes. Ils n'ont pas suffisamment d'argent pour terminer le bâtiment et mettre les équipements. Et ces messieurs-là aiment se faire photographier auprès du Premier ministre en mission !

M. le président, si toutes les conditions sont réunies et si on met de l'ordre dans cette station nationale, l'île Maurice pourra être fière d'avoir une station nationale de radiotélévision digne de ce nom, mais je n'ai pas grand espoir.

M. le président, je reviens sur le développement durable. On a tendance bien souvent à dire que le développement durable c'est l'environnement. Pour moi, le développement durable n'est pas seulement l'environnement. Je sais qu'il y a un comité de coordination, et il y a quelqu'un qui est attaché au bureau du Premier ministre qui fait son travail. Il faut qu'il y ait un travail de coordination entre différents ministères pour que ce projet puisse réussir.

M. le président, concernant le développement durable, je cite quelqu'un pour qui j'ai beaucoup de respect, le Dr. Khalil Elahee, qui est à l'Université de Maurice. Il est un professionnel, et parle sur le développement durable. Il y a des atouts, mais il reste beaucoup à faire.

Voilà ce qu'il dit -

« Rien ne changera aussi longtemps que nous n'acceptons pas de changer nos habitudes. Les mauriciens, en général, ont une culture de mauvaises habitudes. C'est le vrai défi qui se pose à notre avenir énergétique et du projet MID. Or, nous voyons chaque jour que la surconsommation gagne du terrain ; chacun cherchant à dépasser son voisin en matière des biens matériels. La durabilité, comme critère de décision, est rarement prise en compte. Les décideurs ne font que réagir aux crises financières, écologiques ou autres, sans jamais aller jusqu'à remettre en cause notre modèle du développement dépassé. Notre égocentrisme est tout aussi incompatible avec le MID. Le chemin sera très long. »

M. le président, le Dr. Khalil Elahee est un expert de l'université de Maurice. Il n'est pas un politicien. Il donne son opinion dans les journaux sur l'aspect énergie ; il dit qu'il faut une approche globale et un renforcement institutionnel, et nous attendons ce renforcement institutionnel. Si nous ne faisons pas ce renforcement institutionnel, c'est le chaos. Il parle de l'introduction d'un *Energy Efficiency Bill* et de *Energy Management Office*.

M. le président, je crois qu'il est dans l'intérêt de tout le monde d'écouter ces gens compétents, tout comme le professeur de Rosnay. Ce matin, j'ai pris connaissance de l'article qu'il a écrit. Je connais très bien le professeur de Rosnay, que j'ai côtoyé et que je respecte. Il est

le conseiller du Premier ministre et dit qu'il n'est pas un décideur. Sur l'aspect du développement durable, il dit qu'il a remis au Premier ministre, à sa demande, un important rapport, suggérant une stratégie intégrée dans le domaine des énergies renouvelables et des économies d'énergies. Il a fait des suggestions sur le projet d'incinérateur, et dit que des projets alternatifs de production d'énergie des déchets sont à l'étude. J'espère que, dans l'intérêt de l'île Maurice, en ce qui concerne les projets pour la nation, il y aura de la transparence. Au niveau de l'environnement et du développement durable, cela ne concerne pas la politique, mais l'avenir de l'île Maurice.

J'espère que le gouvernement va faire le suivi nécessaire pour une accélération et une meilleure coordination. Maintenant, il y a le ministère de l'environnement et du développement durable, il y a un comptoir au niveau du bureau du Premier ministre, il y a aussi le ministère de l'énergie au niveau du *Deputy Prime Minister*, et le professeur Odendaal a fait un rapport et a demandé un *public comments*. Je crois que, dans un avenir proche, le gouvernement doit venir informer la population au parlement où ils en sont et quels sont leur plans pour les années à venir.

Sur l'environnement, M. le président, je ne vais pas dire grand-chose. Nous avons un nouveau ministre et il a des responsabilités. Je ne vais pas être méchant, mais, durant ces trois dernières années, il n'y a pas eu de grand mouvement. Il y a un effort à faire, car l'île Maurice est sale. Si vous allez dans les gares routières ou que vous marchez dans les rues, vous pourrez le constater. Le Premier ministre avait fait un discours l'autre jour, et il a pu constater qu'il fallait prendre des sanctions. Je m'adresse au ministre de l'environnement, et j'ai déjà envoyé une question parlementaire à ce sujet. Qui est le premier à être sanctionné - j'ai même dit cela au Premier ministre, je crois - ? Il faut sanctionner la police de l'environnement ! Allez voir l'état de ces véhicules ! Je n'ai jamais vu de véhicules aussi malpropres ; des véhicules fumigènes, M. le président. Ce sont des véhicules de la police, et ce sont ces gens qui sont supposés nous sanctionner !

Il y a aussi le service de la voirie, la pollution en général, la pollution de l'air, de l'eau, de nos plages publiques. Il faut que le ministère puisse venir avec un rapport au parlement dans un proche avenir. Nous avons pris la décision de retirer le plomb dans l'essence. Où en sommes-nous aujourd'hui ? Nous avons pris la bonne décision de cesser l'extraction du sable. Vous avez

géré le pays, et nous avons pris des décisions courageuses de cesser avec l'extraction du sable. Mais où en sommes-nous ?

M. le président, allez voir l'état de nos îlots. Je rappelle à l'honorable Bodha l'époque où nous avons visité l'île aux Cerfs. Allez visiter les îlots aujourd'hui, avec les catamarans et ce qu'ils font, sans compter les petits copains qui ont eu ces îlots. J'ai demandé au ministre du tourisme d'aller visiter l'île Plate. Cet îlot a été *vested* au ministère du tourisme, qui l'a donné au *Discovery Mauritius*, et le *Discovery Mauritius* l'a ensuite donné à un gérant. Le *Mauritius Wildlife* et le *National Parks and Gardens* ont effectué une visite récemment et ont soumis un rapport. Lisez ce rapport, et vous aurez honte, en tant que patriotes, sur ce qui a été fait sur l'île Plate ! C'est un crime contre la nature et contre l'environnement ! Ce n'est pas moi ai fait le rapport, l'opposition non plus, mais le *National Parks and Gardens* qui tombe sous la responsabilité du ministère de l'agriculture et le *Mauritius Wildlife*. Comparez ce qui se fait à l'île aux Aigrettes, qui est une fierté nationale et internationale.

Tout cela a trait au développement durable, au ministère de l'environnement, et je ne cesserai jamais de me battre sur les parcours de santé. Il n'y a pas de politique sur la marche, car toutes les couleurs politiques marchent. *Péna tax lor marcher !* Allez voir l'état de la montagne des Signaux, M. le président. Je rends hommage à mon ami Ahmad Jeewa et feu Sir Satcam Boolell, car ce sont eux qui m'ont influencé à faire ce parcours de santé. Le Dauguet était une référence. Allez voir l'état de Dauguet, M. le président. J'inviterai le ministre à aller faire un peu de jogging et voir son état. Par contre, le Gymkhana est bien maintenu ; cela avait été fait par le gouvernement MMM/MSM. J'ai eu l'occasion d'aller voir, et je demanderai à monsieur Dayal de poser une question sur l'état du parcours de santé de Camp Thorel. C'est dans un état lamentable ; il n'y a pas de *follow-up*, ni de *maintenance* ; *l'herbe hauteur Dayal !* C'est un *joke*, évidemment. Posez une question et allez visiter, car tout cela c'est l'environnement. C'est l'Etat qui investit.

M. le président, l'environnement est aussi important. Oui, aujourd'hui il faut l'éducation, mais moi je suis pour la sanction. Il faut infliger des amendes ; notre population a de mauvaises habitudes ; il y les propriétaires de terrains vagues, ceux qui font du *littering*, des véhicules fumigènes. Il faut agir, et il est temps de le faire.

Avant de conclure, M. le président, je ne vais pas parler longuement sur ma circonscription. La circonscription de Beau Bassin a été pénalisée de 2005 à 2010. Nous avons deux PPS. La population va régler ses comptes en temps et lieux, et j'espère que ce n'est pas loin. Nous payons la taxe. Vous savez quel est le problème, M. le président ? C'est un problème qui dure depuis des années. Le Premier ministre nomme des PPS, et voilà que quelqu'un qui est PPS dans la région X est aussi responsable d'une circonscription qui se trouve dans le nord ou dans le sud. Donc, il ne vient jamais. Entre 2000 et 2005, il y avait deux PPS chez nous. L'un est un ami - c'est au-delà de la politique, et je ne vais pas mentionner son nom - et était rémunéré comme PPS, mais il n'a rien fait. Quant aux bureaux du CAB, 'dead' ; c'était entre 2005 et 2010. L'autre a passé plus de temps à donner un VIP à madame X pour transporter du subutex. Vous savez qui c'est, car j'ai moi-même posé cette question parlementaire. Un honorable membre, PPS d'une circonscription où il n'a jamais mis les pieds et n'a fait aucun développement. Et ils ont payé le prix ! Entre 2005 et 2010, le train du développement a été en panne dans ma circonscription. J'espère que cette fois le train de développement va passer, même si ce n'est pas à cent milles, mais à dix milles à l'heure.

*(Interruptions)*

Je ne vais pas me laisser entrainer dans des remarques inutiles.

M. le président, mes collègues vont venir en détail sur les problèmes de la circonscription no. 20. Il y a le problème de drains, d'éclairage, de sécurité publique, de trottoirs, d'infrastructures, et tout cela relève d'un problème national. Voici ce qu'un ministre m'a dit : « *Nous pas pou faire narien cotte twa, to dans l'opposition et to fine trop faire quand to ti ministre* ». Voilà un ministre de l'Etat, de la République, qui me fait une réponse de ce genre. Je souhaite, dans l'intérêt de cette circonscription, qu'il y aura justice au niveau des gens de cette circonscription.

M. le président, je voudrais conclure mon intervention en rappelant simplement que l'exercice du pouvoir implique également le devoir d'assumer de grandes responsabilités, et que les inactions, indécisions, tout comme les mesures cosmétiques, sont des crimes contre le pays. Nous savons tous combien il est urgent de s'attaquer aux maux sociaux profonds qui rongent le pays ; l'accroissement des inégalités et de la pauvreté, la prolifération du trafic de drogue et du

subutex qui a entraîné dans son sillage une recrudescence de la petite et de la grande criminalité, ainsi que l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes et des enfants vulnérables.

Au niveau de la gouvernance également, il est grand temps de mettre un terme à cette gestion 'à peu près'. Il y a trop de copinage, parce que finalement tout ces gaspillages et cette dilapidation des biens publics ne sont que des impôts supplémentaires non budgétés sur la tête de chaque mauricien, sans compter d'immenses opportunités gâchées.

M. le président, l'heure est à l'action, et rien d'autre. Nous sommes dans l'opposition, et nous avons la ferme intention de jouer notre rôle - *pas pou faire cadeau*. A ceux qui disent que nous faisons de la démagogie, je leur dis qu'il n'y a pas de taxe sur la parole. Nous avons été élus pour être dans l'opposition, et je suis heureux. Vous savez ce qui me rend plus heureux, M. le président ? Je n'aurais jamais cru que mon collègue de classe en primaire, à l'école Champ de Lort à Port louis, le Dr. Satish Boolell, serait avec moi aujourd'hui. Je suis un enfant de la Ward IV. Avec tous ces jeunes, hommes et femmes, nous avons une équipe formidable. Nous sommes prêts à relever le défi, et de faire...

*(Interruptions)*

Oui, nous n'avons pas honte ! *Pas gagne tracas nous dans l'opposition/nous dans gouvernement ! Ena pé suicider quand pas dans gouvernement !* Nous ne sommes jamais découragés. Nous savons comment rebondir. Le MMM reste et restera, avec Paul Bérenger, le premier parti politique de l'île Maurice.

Merci, M. le président.

(6.41 p.m)

**The Minister of Industry and Commerce (Mr S. Soodhun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened carefully to the hon. Member without making any comments. I hope that the hon. Member will also do the same, and have the courage to listen to me. First, I wish to join the House to congratulate you, as well as the Deputy Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. Your re-appointment, Mr Speaker, Sir, confirms our appreciation for the skill and dignity with which you manage the debates in this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Prime Minister for having entrusted to me the portfolio of Industry and Commerce, both being of critical importance for the economic

development of this country. It is also my duty to express my gratitude in this House, to the voters of my constituency. I have been representing them for the past 23 years in the same constituency. I thank them for having renewed their trust in me and my two colleagues. I would like also to congratulate all the new hon. Members. I would also like to pay tribute to my leader, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, for having trusted me, and he can always rest assured of my contribution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 05 May 2010, the citizens of Mauritius made their choice freely and democratically. They had a choice between stability and instability, between unity and of division. They chose stability and unity. They said no to demagoguery, and voted for a team which represents political stability and continuity. Our alliance is based on trust and mutual respect, and those who believe that they can divide us - *ceux qui sèment la zizanie* - should stop dreaming. I listened carefully to hon. Bhagwan, whom I do respect as a pioneer Member of this House. He has made his *discours de sortie*...

*(Interruptions)*

I can see on his face that he looks like a *député fatigué, déchiré et comme on dit*...

*(Interruptions)*

When he delivered his speech, I never made any comments. He must have the courage to listen.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, but the Minister should not...

**Mr Soodhun:** I can't see what is wrong. He himself said that it is his last speech on the Presidential address. After every general election, we do have one Presidential address, and he mentioned himself...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Soodhun, you should not make a physical description of the hon. Member.

**Mr Soodhun:** I am not making a physical description. I said that he has been here for 27 years.

**Mr Speaker:** The fact that he is exiting, he is looking younger.

**Mr Soodhun:** Oh I see! Thank God! I'll pray that he has a good health. There is no problem. It is not my intention to criticise the health of the hon. Member.

**Mr Speaker:** Come back to the speech!

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I congratulate him at the same time. I listened to him carefully, and I join him to say that I am against any communal campaign. We have been given a good example in Constituency No. 15; three *ex aequo*. Hon. Bhagwan mentioned Constituency No. 20. The majority of electors are Christians, and he has always been elected. In my constituency, the majority of voters are Hindus. But, most of the time, a non-Hindu is elected first Member, and I am glad that my friend, Patrick Assirvaden, has been elected first Member. My good friend, Dr. Hawoldar, myself and even my friend, Dr. Sorefan, are proud.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to what has happened in Constituency No. 2 against the Deputy Prime Minister and the way they proceeded, the way they campaigned - he admits - the young hon. Member should have learnt from hon. Bhagwan. As he mentioned, we should not encourage a communal campaign. But what they have done in Constituency No. 2, nobody will forget. I am very sad for a young politician to start his career on such a very bad note and campaign.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Soodhun, please listen to me. I have to sound a note of warning to you that you cannot accuse any Member of this House to have acted communally.

**Mr Soodhun:** I have not mentioned any hon. Member. I said a young...

**Mr Speaker:** You can speak generally.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, *la vérité fait mal*. It is very difficult to listen to the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Il faut qu'ils se mettent debout devant un miroir. A ce moment, ils verront leur propre visage. C'est cela qui est important.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! No interruptions, please!

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, what has the MMM not said for the 2005 election! They blamed us, the MSM, for having lost the last general election in 2005. This time, they went alone in the elections but could not win; instead, they lost their lieutenants, the *ténors*.

*(Interruptions)*

Most of them are outside the House. The MMM has reached the weakest point of its history during these general elections. Where are Mr Ramjuttun, Mr Dulloo, Mr Ashock Jugnauth?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, can I ask you not to interrupt, please?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, where are all these *ténors*? Mr Ajay Gunness, Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo, Mr Pradeep Jeeha! Mr Pradeep Jeeha, *trois madames ine batte li dans élection!*

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not going to take lessons from these people. We know them.

*(Interruptions)*

*C'est le dernier règne du MMM ! C'est fini !* They will never come back!

*(Interruptions)*

This is all that they have! They will never come back in a Government!

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are proud to work under the leadership of Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, who has an open approach, and is at the disposal of his team for any advice and guidance. He allows Ministers the autonomy to perform their work.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea! Could you please keep quiet? I am asking both sides of the House not to interrupt the hon. Minister, please!

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have sincerity of purpose and a collective vision for the people of our country, and we will do our best to implement all the commitments taken in the Government Programme. Mr Speaker, Sir, the vision of this Government is to ensure economic development without creating exclusion. We believe that economic progress should bring greater social justice, and the economic activities cannot forever be concentrated in the hands of

a few. This is why this Government Programme is centred on three key areas: economic democratisation, social integration and expanding educational opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for the creation of a Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment to address the problem of social exclusion. This is the first time that such a Ministry has been set up and my good friend, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, can rely on our total support and collaboration in this challenging responsibility.

Mr Speaker, Sir, social justice and empowerment also mean fair participation and distribution. The Sugar Investment Trust (SIT), set up in 1994, has allowed small planters and workers to participate in sugar milling companies. The Employees' Real Estate Investment Trust (EREIT), set up in 2005, which aims at democratising land ownership, will be strengthened. The hon. Prime Minister has always insisted on the need to open economic opportunities to citizens and more competition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the industrial sector contributes about 53.1% to GDP. It is critical to maintain the vitality of this sector, as it is one of the main employment providers with more than 120,000 workers depending on this sector. Employment is a means to live decently; it is a source of dignity and enables people to overcome poverty. The overall strategic thrust of Government is to create a globally competitive, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible industrial sector. Mr Speaker, Sir, since its existence, the industrial sector in Mauritius has experienced numerous difficulties. But it has successfully overcome them. This is a sector that remains continuously at risk, because it should remain competitive and has to continually adapt to new exigencies of the global economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are now facing the Euro zone crisis, which has given rise to the uncertainties, as more than 60% of our products are exported to Europe.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is addressing this issue, as he mentioned in his answer to PNQ this morning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure the sustainability of the sector, we should focus on a number of critical areas. Firstly, Government and private sector should work together to invest heavily in generating industry-relevant knowledge and in a technical education, to enable our industries to innovate and produce higher quality products.

In line with our Industrial and SMEs Strategic Plan 2010-2013, we would look into schemes to boost research and development and skills development in new emerging sectors that are knowledge-intensive and highly productive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is already placing emphasis on education. All the strategies proposed in the Government Programme, such as the provision of laptops and free internet access to needy students, increasing opportunities for the tertiary education through new campuses and distance education, will increase the employability of young people.

I wish to underline that there are many opportunities for young people in the industrial sector. Our industrial sector needs well trained, skilled and competent labour force. My Ministry will work with the Human Resources Development Council, the National Empowerment Foundation, and the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to develop new programmes and training, which would respond to the needs of the industrial sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, secondly, we need to provide high performing and quality infrastructure to facilitate the industrial sector.

This Government will be investing huge sums to address the problems of traffic congestion, for the construction of new roads, development of the port and airport and improving the services offered by government agencies. In this respect, I intend to invite the proposed Industrial Advisory Council to examine issues regarding facilitation of industrial development and to provide advice.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker Sir, we have not only to encourage investment but also ensure quality of investment. We do not want short-lived investments which end up in liquidation of business and loss of employment.

My Ministry will work with the Board of Investment and other relevant institutions to strengthen the criteria to assess the financial sustainability of new investments. Investment has, until now, focused on labour intensive activities and a narrow range of products. It is time that we start looking for the investment which would be technology intensive and produce high value products.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we will set up an *Observatoire de l'Industrie*, which will act as a one-stop shop, to update our operators on changes in the regional and international economic and trading environment. It will -

- (i) collect information and data on new technology, markets, investment, profile of competitors and trade agreements, amongst others, to disseminate information to public institutions and our business operators;
- (ii) scan the regional and international economic environment and disseminate information on trends in global investment, profile of potential investors and countries where business operators are delocalising;
- (iii) facilitate investment missions to target the appropriate investors, and
- (iv) help to identify the right products in the value chain.

The business operators need an early warning system to support new competitors and to detect hidden opportunities earlier than their competitors, and capitalise on the first mover advantage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the new industrial development model is based on clean and eco-friendly production. Cleaner production is of critical importance in global trading, as buyers are increasingly looking for eco-friendly products.

The Prime Minister has been personally championing the *Maurice Ile Durable* initiative, which is a vision for sustainable development in the industrial sector. This means that operators should have a new mindset and consider -

- efficient use of energy, and reducing dependence on fossil fuels;
- designing environmentally friendly products and services;
- reusing or recycling industrial and non-industrial wastes, and
- improving their industrial processes.

In this context, Mauritius is actively participating in a regional UNIDO project, aimed at assisting seven countries to create an operational Clean Development Mechanism and a voluntary carbon market framework. A Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Programme will be implemented to facilitate the transition to cleaner production in the industrial sector.

Enterprise Mauritius will host the programme for three years, after which the establishment of a Cleaner Production Centre will be envisaged.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another important area on which we will focus is modernisation and upgrading of technology, in order to increase our competitiveness.

According to UNIDO, most of the drive to greater technological sophistication in manufacturing emanates from East Asia, which has the most advanced industrial structure among developing regions.

We will consider new schemes to encourage technology development in our industrial sector. My Ministry, in collaboration with Enterprise Mauritius, will enlist the services of a high level expert to carry out an audit of the technology level among our enterprises and determine the constraints for technology upgrading. The expert will conduct workshops sector-wise, to formulate viable and result-oriented technology development plans.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has successfully exploited the advantages of preferential access on the EU market to develop a vibrant textile and clothing industry. However, the dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement in 2005 is exerting considerable competitive pressures on our export enterprises. Negotiations at the WTO on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) may lead to phasing out of duties in developed economies on many products of interests to Mauritius. In this context, our suppliers will be called upon to compete in a more open trading environment.

Our exporters should explore new opportunities for exports to emerging markets. In this context, Enterprise Mauritius will identify new markets through market surveys and conduct of buyers'-sellers' meetings. To this end, markets in the Middle East and the African region among others will be explored.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will support enterprises in their efforts to develop branded products. Enterprise Mauritius has been implementing a Grant Development Scheme. We will explore opportunities to widen the scope of the scheme, and develop new measures so that an increasing number of enterprises can undertake the necessary processes to develop brands and increase sales of their products.

Mr Speaker, Sir, consumers in developed economies place increasing importance on products manufactured, in line with ethical and fair trade norms. The industry sector has to comply with strict norms relating to labour and occupational health, safety standards, good governance and eco-friendly production, among others. While my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and Employment, is ensuring that labour norms are respected, my Ministry will promote ethical and fair trade practices among business operators through training and sensitisation programmes.

Mr Speaker Sir, the twin processes of globalisation combined with ICT revolution have dramatically changed market conditions and the nature of competitiveness. The traditional modes of competitiveness, based on cost and price factors, are being increasingly replaced by non-price factors such as quality, flexibility, design, reliability and responsiveness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is implementing a scheme, through Enterprise Mauritius, to assist enterprises to implement a quality system. Under this scheme, enterprises are provided both financial and technical assistance on a cost sharing basis to set up their quality infrastructure so that they can produce goods and services that meet the tests of international markets.

In this context, Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB) and MAURITAS will develop new standards, provide a wide range of testing facilities and assist enterprises to ensure compliance with international norms and standards. Government will provide MSB with necessary resources to upgrade its laboratories and modernise its equipment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the highest technology sectors, which we are promoting is jewellery. This is a sector which needs higher skills. We need to introduce training in the art of jewellery designing, the skill to understand market temperaments, and identifying consumer needs. My Ministry, in partnership with the relevant institutions, will organise a Jewellery Fair this year.

As regards other industrial activities, medical devices such as cardiac balloons are being produced in Mauritius. We will explore possibilities of encouraging investment in the bio-health and pharmaceutical sector, which offers scope for growth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, technical textiles is a new area on which my Ministry will focus. Diversification into high performance textiles represents an opportunity to upgrade our local textile and clothing industry, particularly in the wake of the WTO negotiations.

The market for technical textiles is significant and expanding, as the products are being put to an ever-increasing number of uses in various industries such as agriculture, clothing, construction, health care, transportation, packaging, sports, environmental protection, protective wear, and many more.

Appropriate investment promotion missions will be carried out to secure the latest technologies and global players to rapidly develop this sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Commerce Division of my Ministry plays a vital role in facilitating trade and is ensuring a constant supply of basic commodities for the country. My Ministry would take appropriate measures to improve the trade and business climate; existing regulations would be further streamlined and modernised to reduce the cost of doing business and facilitate imports and exports.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the STC deals in the import of key commodities such as petroleum products and LPG Gas, rice, flour and cement, and has an annual turnover of around Rs30 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, annually, STC provides subsidies to the tune of Rs1.2 billion on rice, flour and LPG to protect the low-income groups and enhance the purchasing power of the consumers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is imperative for STC to operate efficiently and effectively. It should continue improving its corporate governance and image.

The organisation will have to re-engineer itself and redesign its business processes to achieve improvements in performance, quality and profitability. In this context, we will strengthen the competence of the Board, and improve communication with the public.

Additionally, the technical capabilities of the institution will be reinforced through the recruitment of high calibre professionals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the fast growing economic activities in Mauritius and the implementation of the 24/7 concept, there is an increasing demand for petroleum products and cement.

The demand is expected to accentuate in the future with the implementation of various infrastructural projects. In this context, there is a need to increase our storage capacity to cater for the future demand.

As a precautionary measure, STC will shortly embark on the construction of a new storage facility of an additional 5000 MT in the port area to increase our storage capacity to 10,000 MT. The construction will start by end of July 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, very often, we are faced with low stock of gas oil whenever there is a delay in the arrival of a tanker. The present storage capacity is limited and is considered to be dangerous, as we may face a disruption of supply at any time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a forward-looking Government, we intend to take appropriate measures to increase our storage capacity very soon.

In this context, my Ministry is calling for submission of request for proposal from interested parties for the construction of 25,000 MT storage facilities. The new storage facility will be financed by the private sector, which will be responsible for its construction, operation and maintenance.

During my recent visit to the STC sheds, I noted that rice and flour were stored in a poor condition. To remedy the situation, STC will initiate procedures for the construction of a modern shed of international standard at Riche Terre. The new shed will also accommodate a packing plant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the industrial sector has to face many challenges in the present international economic situation which is disturbed by financial crisis in several parts of the world. We have to respond quickly and effectively, but we also have to be pro-active. For this, we need political, social and financial stability, and we need serious commitment and strong leadership.

It is this Government which will provide the stability and security needed for the future growth of the industry in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to conclude by saying that we have been elected, and whether people are allergic or non-allergic to *bleu-blanc-rouge*, we don't care. We are going to govern as a team and fulfil our commitments, and the people have to wait and see. We are not considered as *des prophètes de malheur* or whatever it is. We are going to do our work.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Peetumber:** Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

**Mr Moutia rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 29 June 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.**

**Mr Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

*At 7.16 p.m the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 29 June 2010 at 11.30 a.m.*

### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### SUNEE SURTEE GOVT. SCHOOL - POLLING STATION - INCIDENT

(No. 1B/78) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the incident which occurred on 05 May 2010 in front of the Sunee Surtee Government School polling station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if -

- (a) any inquiry has been carried thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof;
- (b) any politician and the Lord Mayor were involved, and

(c) any arrest has been effected.

**Reply:** In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 05 May 2010, the police officer in charge of police duties at Surtee Soonee Government School polling station received complaints regarding the unauthorised presence of the Lord Mayor within the precincts of 200 metres of the school on two occasions; at 10.30 hours and 15.30 hours, respectively. On both occasions, the Lord Mayor was requested by the police to leave the place, which he did.

I am also informed that, on the same day, at about 16.00 hours, another incident occurred along Alma Street, Vallée Pitot, involving the Lord Mayor and one Mr Y. R. As a result, a group of about 15 persons gathered. In order to prevent the situation from deteriorating, the police intervened, and the Lord Mayor was escorted outside the 200 metres precinct of the polling station.

I am further informed that, on the same day, an enquiry has been initiated for the offence of “undue influence, that is, loitering in any street, or open place, within 200 metres of the precinct of a polling station” in breach of section 65(2)(d)(i) of the Representation of People Act against the Lord Mayor. Investigation is ongoing.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the law does not provide for arrests in such cases. Police normally act with tact and discernment by requesting such persons to vacate the premises, to ensure the smooth conduct of elections.

### **CALODYNE – FEROCIOUS DOGS - ATTACKS**

**(No. 1B/79) 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 attacks by ferocious dogs, which occurred at Calodyne, on or about Wednesday 19 May 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 19 May 2010, two dogs - one Rottweiler and one German Shepherd - attacked and injured three children at Calodyne.

Police instituted an enquiry into the matter and the owner of the dogs, one Mr Y.C, was arrested on 21 May 2010. He appeared before the Rivière du Rempart District Court on a provisional charge of “Wounds and Blows with Aggravating Circumstances” and was released on bail upon furnishing a surety of Rs5,000 and entering into a recognizance of Rs50,000. Investigation into the matter is still ongoing.

I am very concerned with the increasing number of attacks by dogs. I feel that there is an urgent need to review the existing legislation to address the issue of aggression by dogs. As a matter of fact, I have already given instructions to the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security for the elaboration of a ‘Dog Control Bill’ to address, *inter alia*, the care and control of dogs, the registration of dogs, special provision in relation to dangerous dogs and menacing dogs, and to make provision in relation to damage caused by dogs. Action in this connection has already been initiated.

#### **WORKERS (FOREIGN) – LIVING & WORKING CONDITIONS**

**(1B/108) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to foreign workers in Mauritius, he will state if he has received complaints of the ill-treatment meted out to them and, if so, will he state the measures that will be taken to provide them with humane living and working conditions.

**Reply:** My Ministry has registered several complaints of ill-treatment of foreign workers relating namely, to inhuman living conditions in dormitories and also violence at work. All complaints registered have been investigated into.

In cases where complaints in respect of living conditions are founded, employers are requested to take remedial actions and follow-up inspections visits are carried out.

In most of the cases of violence at work, employers deny having ill-treated the workers. The workers also do not wish to give evidence to the Ministry to enable criminal action to be initiated. They prefer to be repatriated. Employers are, however, apprised of the provisions of the law which protect workers against violence at work. The employers are informed that they may be liable to prosecution if a *prima facie* case of violence at work is established. Follow-up inspection visits are also carried out in these cases.

I wish to inform the House that a migrant worker enjoys terms and conditions of employment which are no less favourable than those granted to a local worker and no less favourable than what is prescribed in the Remuneration Orders. A migrant worker earns the same prescribed salary as a local worker.

Prior to joining the services of a prospective employer, the contract of employment of a migrant worker is vetted by my Ministry to ensure that it does not contain abusive clauses and is in conformity with the new labour legislation.

Regular visits are being carried out by officers of my Ministry to ensure that conditions of employment are in compliance with the contracts of employment and new legislation.

My Ministry is presently in the process of finalising the Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) Regulations. Extensive consultations are being held with the various enforcing agencies concerned with the proposed Regulations, namely: Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, WasteWater Management Authority, Government Fire Services, Central Electricity Board, Central Water Authority and Local Authorities to look into the enforcement aspect.

### **CHILDREN - STUNTING**

**(No. 1B/109) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to children under the age of five, she will state the percentage thereof suffering from severe or moderate stunting.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that the percentage of severe or moderate stunting among children under 5 years can be obtained only through a specific survey. So far, two surveys had been carried out in 1985 and 1995. These surveys revealed the following -

- (i) the prevalence of severe stunting among 0-5 years old children was 8.9% in 1985 compared to 2.5% in 1995, whereas
- (ii) the prevalence of moderate stunting in the same group of children was 12.6% in 1985 and 7.1% in 1995.

Stunting is caused by chronic malnutrition. After the 1985 survey, a Nutritional Surveillance System was set up by the Nutrition Unit of my Ministry to monitor the growth of children under 5 years.

This resulted in the significant improvement in the percentage of severe and moderate stunting shown by the 1995 survey.

Chronic malnutrition and, therefore, stunting, is no longer an issue in Mauritius.

### **MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS – MATERIALS - LOSS**

**(No. 1B/110) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information, as to the number of reported cases, since 2005 to date, of loss of material belonging to the Council in which its employees are involved, indicating whether an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that, since 2005 to date, five cases of thefts have occurred at various sites, resulting in loss of materials such as iron chains, bars, electric cables and batteries. Only two of these cases involve employees of the Municipality of Port Louis.

I am further informed that these cases were reported to the police department, and enquiries are ongoing.

### **CENTRAL MARKET – THEFTS**

**(No. 1B/111) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, he will state if he is aware of the complaints of the stallholders of the Central Market of Port Louis made in connection with theft of their properties at night and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken to address the issue.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that seven cases of thefts, five in the vegetables section and two in the meat section, at the Central Market, had been reported, and investigations are underway at the level of police department.

I am further informed that, with a view to enhance security in the market, the Municipal Council is proposing to place CCTV cameras in strategic points inside the Central Market, and preliminary surveys have already been conducted in this respect.

#### **LE BOUCHON – PROJECTS**

**(No. 1B/112) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the private projects at Le Bouchon, he will state if he is aware of the complaints of the fishermen of the region in relation thereto and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken to address the issue.

**Reply:** I am informed that the same Parliamentary Question No. B/1009 was put by hon. Barbier on 20 October 2009, and that a written reply had been circulated on the same day.

Now that the matter has been referred to Court by the Beach Authority, it would be *sub judice* for me to make any further statement.

#### **PAILLES – WASTE WATER NETWORK**

**(No. 1B/113) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the waste water network in the region of Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand.

**Reply:** The hon. Member may wish to refer to my reply to PQ B/1314 of 01 December 2009, wherein I informed the House that the detailed design of this project was under review and was expected to be completed by March 2010.

I am now advised by the Wastewater Management Authority that the consultant has, in his preliminary findings, concluded that the initial detailed design will require substantial modifications to take into account new developments, such as the widening of the motorway and the construction of a new bridge along the Pailles Junction Road and the increase in the number of households from 1,600 to 2,600.

The proposals of the consultant for the redesign of the project are being examined by the Wastewater Management Authority in consultation with the funding agencies, namely BADEA and the OPEC Fund.

The project will also require additional funding, which has to be mobilised before the implementation of the project.

### **CITÉ SADALLY, VACOAS – BUS SERVICE**

(No. 1B/114) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to public transport, he will state if he is aware of the problems encountered by the inhabitants of Cité Sadally, Vacoas and, if so, the measures Government proposes to take to address the issue, giving the details thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by both the NTA and the NTC that no complaints have been received from the inhabitants of Cité Sadally, Vacoas, regarding the problem encountered by them.

I am also informed that bus transport facilities are available at regular intervals along Sadally Road by NTC buses operating along route 134 (Bord Cascade-Curepipe).

Nonetheless, I have already requested the National Transport Authority to liaise with the National Transport Corporation to look into the possibility of providing a circular bus service.

### **BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION – DISALLOWED CASES**

(No. 1B/115) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Basic Invalidity Pension, she will state the number thereof which have been disallowed in -

- (a) 2007;
- (b) 2008, and
- (c) 2009

indicating whether they include persons suffering from permanent disability or chronic illnesses.

**Reply:** The number of applications for Basic Invalidity Pensions which have been disallowed for 2007, 2008 and 2009 is being tabled.

It is to be noted that there are two types of disallowed cases. The first type relates to new cases, while the second one is in respect of cases whereby persons have been granted the Basic Invalidation Pension for a certain period but were not found eligible following medical reboarding after the said period.

In reply to the second part of the question, I wish to point out that, in accordance with the National Pensions Act, a person is eligible to Basic Invalidation Pension provided he or she has a disability which is not less than 60%. The figures tabled for 2007 to 2009 may include persons with a permanent disability or chronic illness that does not meet the 60% disablement eligibility criteria as per the National Pensions Act. It is to be noted that many such cases are further referred for social aid.

### **STANLEY & ROSE HILL - NDU PROJECTS**

**(No. 1B/116) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No.19, Stanley and Rose Hill, he will give a list of the NDU projects already approved therefor, indicating which projects have not yet been implemented or completed, if any, as at 30 April 2010 and, if so, the reasons therefor, and indicate the expected timeframe for the completion thereof.

**Reply:** The list of ongoing and new projects for Constituency No. 19 will be placed in the Library of the House.

### **EBÈNE – BUS STAND**

**(No. 1B/117) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if it is proposed to put up a bus stand at Ebène and, if so, indicate -

- (a) if land has already been earmarked for the project, and
- (b) the date when works are expected to start and the duration thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that it is proposing to put up a bus stand at Ebène. In this connection, a site of 3.417 *hectares* has been earmarked for a proposed traffic centre at Ebène.

A preliminary design layout has already been done, and work will start as soon as funds are made available.

### **PLAZA THEATRE – RENOVATION**

(No. 1B/118) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the renovation of the Plaza theatre at Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to –

- (a) the scope of the works;
- (b) works carried out as at to date;
- (c) the estimated cost thereof, and
- (d) when the theatre and *salle des fêtes* will be operational.

**Reply:** The Plaza theatre is part of our cultural heritage, and we should definitely spare no efforts to renovate and preserve it. In view of the considerable amount required for the renovation of the theatre, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has, therefore, considered it wise to proceed with the works in a phased manner. According to plan, the renovation works should be carried out in three phases as follows -

- Phase I consists of the design, supply and installation of new roof coverings, and ancillary works at roof level estimated at Rs90 m. This very first phase is considered to be very important and urgent, in order to prevent the building from falling apart and to protect it from further deterioration.
- Phase II consists of renovation of Administrative Block and *Salle des Fêtes* estimated at Rs67 m.
- Phase III consists of refurbishment of the theatre estimated at Rs390 m.

I am informed that Phase I has been completed. However, phases II and III would require a total investment estimated at Rs457 m., which the Municipality cannot afford. Once the funding will be secured, the works will be undertaken, and thereafter the theatre and *Salle des Fêtes* will become operational.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the detailed information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

### **PRIMARY SCHOOLS – PRIVATE TUITION**

**(No. 1B/119) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to private tuition in the primary sector, he will state the measures being taken and that will be taken to address the adverse impact thereof on the students.

**Reply:** In my reply to PQ No. B/619 on 23 June 2009 on the same issue, I pointed out that private tuition is a phenomenon which is deep-rooted in our educational system and, at the local level, it is widespread especially in the primary and secondary sub-sectors. Government is fully aware of the adverse impact of private tuition on students, and has been looking into ways and means to address the problem.

The Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 underscores the need for a review of our current policy of private tuition. Consultations held on the matter revealed that a holistic and integrated approach should be adopted to address private tutoring which has been in place for years. This approach aims at tackling the problem at its very root and not merely dealing with the symptoms. This explains our opting for a phased process.

A number of measures have thus been worked on, some of which are already in place and yielding positive results, while others are to be implemented shortly.

As you are aware, at the primary level, we now have three cycles of two years as compared to two cycles of three years previously. As from this year, we are embarking on a national remedial education strategy for Standard III pupils, to improve the performance of these pupils who are moving on to the second primary cycle. This remedial strategy is a follow-up of the Diagnostic Assessment exercise initiated, and which has identified weaknesses at Standard III level. Remedial measures are thus being applied at an early stage to overcome learning deficits that would otherwise cumulate over the years.

Further, we have introduced the Enhancement Programme at Std IV level. This after-school hours innovative programme, using a differentiated pedagogy and backed by co- and extra-curricular activities, has received widespread acceptance from the community of parents

who have clearly understood the benefits of this innovative programme and encouraged their wards to actively participate therein. Already, a majority of pupils are participating in the programme, which has necessitated an investment of some Rs30 m. from Government.

There are substantial benefits that are accruing from this programme. Indeed, so much so that parents would much rather have their children exposed to its richness than having to make them labour under the heavy burden of private tutoring. After all, this programme is beneficial for the gifted, the average and the slow learners.

Since Std IV pupils belong to the second cycle, we believe that the policy regarding private tuition applicable to the first three years of primary schooling, inside and outside the school environment, should logically, and for reasons spelt out earlier, be extended to this Standard also. This explains why we are already implementing the decision of not allowing private tuition at Standard IV on school premises and, as already announced, we have proposed to extend the existing policy on private tuition for pupils of Standards I, II and III to Standard IV as well.

Furthermore, I wish, at this stage, to inform the House that, following the announcement made for the introduction of the draft Amendment Bill for the above purpose into the National Assembly, I have received further comments on the issue of private tutoring from the main stakeholders of the sector which, *inter alia*, relates to parental right of choice to education and control of private tuition by way of regulation, and these are being given due consideration before finalising shortly relevant amendments to be made to legislations.

I would also like to add that it is desirable that all partners and stakeholders have a concerted approach, with a view to evolving a national consensus on the issue in the best interest of our students.

#### **NTC HEADQUARTERS - EBENE**

**(No. 1B/120) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the new building at Ebène to house the National Transport Corporation, he will state –

- (a) the costs thereof ;

- (b) whether the building has been handed over, and
- (c) if it is presently occupied and, if so, by whom.

**Reply:** I am informed by the NTC that the cost of the construction of its new building to house its headquarters at Ebène amounts to around Rs114,951,524.56.

With regard to parts (b) and (c), I wish to inform the House that the building is still under construction.

### **VANDERMEERSCH STREET – TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

(No. 1B/121) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to traffic congestion at Vandermeersch Street at peak hours, in the morning and in the afternoon, he will state the remedial measures taken to address the issue.

**Reply:** Vandermeersch Street is a classified road and falls under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. It is a main traffic carrier, which links the roundabout of Beau Bassin to the roundabout at the exit of Rose Hill Bus Station.

Vandermeersch permits only a two-lane traffic movement opposing each other. There are two traffic lights along the road; with one located at its junction with Malartic Street and the second one at its junction with Reverand Lebrun Street. Currently, the heaviest local traffic from the side of Balfour Garden accedes onto Vandermeersch Street through Malartic Street. The police man the lights during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

The best solution would have been to provide an additional lane along Vandermeersch Street. However, this is not possible as it involves use of the land reserved for the Mass Transit System.

To remedy the situation, we had recourse to short term measures. In this regard, TMRSU has already re-timed the traffic lights, and yellow lines have been marked where required. The police are also providing a helping hand by its presence in controlling the traffic during peak hours.

### **ROYAL ROAD & DR MAURICE CURÉ STREET, ROSE HILL - FOOTPATHS & DRAINS**

(No. 1B/122) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the footpaths and drains along the Royal Road and the Dr Maurice Curé Street, Rose Hill, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry for the upgrading and maintenance thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed that the footpaths and drains along the Royal Road at Rose Hill are in good condition and regularly maintained by the Road Development Authority (RDA).

As regards Dr Maurice Curé Street, I am informed that the street is a non-classified road and is under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. A proper drainage over 700 metres is required on both sides of the street.

#### **EMBASSIES – OFFICIALS - CONSULTATIONS**

(No. 1B/123) **Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to official/s posted in our Embassies abroad, he will state -

- (a) if, since March 2010 to date, they have been called for consultations and, if so, indicate
  - (i) the number thereof;
  - (ii) their ranks;
  - (iv) the Embassies, and
  - (iv) expenses incurred in connection therewith, and
- (b) the nature of the consultations and the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that only one official, namely H.E Mr A. Kundasamy, High Commissioner in London, was called for consultations during the period March 2010 to date.

An amount of Mauritian Rupees 50,915 was incurred in relation to the payment of air ticket and allowances.

With regard to part (b) of the question -

- (i) High Commissioner H.E. Mr A. Kundasamy was called for consultations by the Government, following the decision of the British Government to establish a marine protected area in the waters of the Chagos Archipelago, and
- (ii) action taken as a result of these consultations included the following -
  - (a) letters were addressed by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to hon. William Hague, then Shadow Foreign Minister of the Conservative Party, and hon. Edward Davey, then Shadow Foreign Minister of the Liberal Democratic Party, to convey the concerns of Mauritius over the marine protected area and seek their support for the position of Mauritius on the matter, and
  - (b) the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was requested to address the matter at its meeting scheduled for 16 April 2010 in London on the grounds that the creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago constitutes a violation of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth enshrined in the Harare Declaration. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group decided to request comments and explanations from the UK on the matter.

#### **MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - CENTRES – USE**

**(No. 1B/124) 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 use of Municipal centres in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the criteria to be met by social organisations to benefit from the use thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipality Council of Port Louis that, since decades, the criteria to be met by social organisations to benefit from the use of municipal centres are as follows -

- (i) the social organisations need to be registered with the Municipal Council of Port Louis;

- (ii) the centres are to be used for social and cultural purposes only;
- (iii) availability of the centres, and
- (iv) applications are processed on a first come first served basis.

### **RICHE TERRE – ROUNDABOUT – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. 1B/125) 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 roundabout presently under construction on the highway at Riche Terre, he will state -

- (a) if a Traffic Impact Assessment was carried out in relation thereto;
- (b) the cost of the project, and
- (c) whether his Ministry has received any complaint concerning traffic congestion in the area.

**Reply:** The access road at Riche Terre is being built in the context of the agreement between Government of Mauritius and Tianli Economic and Construction Zone presently known as Jin Fei.

The roundabout, which is currently under construction at Riche Terre, forms part of the access road to their development. The access road, including the roundabout, is a requirement in the Master Plan submitted by the developer who made its own assessment of traffic and road network need. Traffic Impact Assessment for Government projects is not required.

I am tabling extracts of the Tianli Master Plan showing the new access road.

The cost of the project, which includes a dual carriageway of the length of 1.1 km, three roundabouts, street lighting, drains and other amenities, is Rs100,646,620.

As an immediate measure to mitigate the traffic congestion problem, a third lane is being constructed from the new roundabout to the existing Terre Rouge roundabout. The purpose of a roundabout is to manage vehicular traffic from various entry points. However, it is noted that these roundabouts also affect fluidity of traffic. The accepted solution worldwide to this issue is the replacement of roundabouts by grade separated junctions, as is the case at Réduit, which cost Rs176m in 1997. Ideally, the 24 existing roundabouts from SSR Airport to Grand Bay can be

thus replaced by grade separated junctions. A study has already been commissioned to prioritise the replacement of the roundabouts in view of the heavy investments involved. The traffic problem at Terre Rouge will also be addressed in this context.

### **POINTE AUX CAVES – PULVERISED COAL PLANT – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. 1B/126) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a coal fired power plant at Pointe aux Caves, he will state

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- (a) where matters stand and
- (b) whether the Environment Impact Assessment has now been granted and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed by the CEB that, after conclusions of negotiations with CT Power for the setting up of a 2 X 55 MW Pulverised Coal plant at Pointe Aux Caves on 23 December 2008, the following agreements have already been signed -

- Power Purchase Agreement (PPA);
- Interconnection Facility Design and Build Agreement (IFDBA);
- Shareholders Agreement (SA), and
- Coal Supply Agreement (CSA).

These agreements are subject to the Promoter obtaining an EIA Licence.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development that the EIA application was received on 06 April 2007. In September 2008, the Ministry of Environment appointed Consultants Mott Mac Donald and Global Coastal Strategies to undertake an independent evaluation and assessment of the EIA. The consultants submitted their report in December 2008.

Based on the recommendations of the consultants on 04 September 2009, the promoter was requested to submit a supplemental EIA report to address the shortcomings in the original EIA through additional studies namely -

- updating of the Traffic Impact Assessment report;
- stack height determination exercise;
- adequacy of the ash disposal and run-off;
- selection of a new outfall location based on systematic assessment of alternatives;
- a hydrodynamic modelling to assess impacts of proposed structures at sea, and
- thorough socio-economic assessment including cost-benefit analysis.

I am advised that, on 16 June 2010, the promoter has submitted the supplemental EIA report to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and that the report is being opened for public comments and circulated to the Authorities/Ministries concerned for their views.

#### **INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS- ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION**

**(No. 1B/127) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the production of electricity by the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) he will state -

- (a) if the study carried out in relation thereto has been completed and
- (b) whether there is any dispute between Government and the IPPS on certain aspects of the Report.

**Reply:** In accordance with the agreement signed in April 2008 by Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA), an independent consultant Hunton & Williams was appointed in May 2009, jointly by Government and MSPA, to review the energy sector as applicable to the Independent Power Producers.

The consultants started their work on 08 June 2009, and submitted their final report in October 2009.

The IPPs have expressed their disagreement to the consultant on certain aspects of the report. This is a matter to be addressed by the IPPs and the consultant.

#### **TRANQUEBAR- ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

**(No. 1B/128) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that some 50 families in the region of Tranquebar, known as Camp Manna, are being deprived of electricity supply and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the house, obtain from the Central Electricity Board information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** According to information obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the 50 families at Camp Manna are presently occupying privately owned land. They have not produced any of the documents required by the CEB for electricity supply.

The CEB will provide electricity to the residents, if the owner of the land is identified and gives the necessary authorisations to these families to occupy the land.

#### **MAURITIUS/INDIA - DOUBLE TAXATION TREATY**

**(No. 1B/129) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Double Taxation Treaty between Mauritius and India, he will state if-

- (a) the said Treaty is being re-negotiated, and
- (b) if any joint committee between the Mauritian and Indian Authorities has been set up to reassure the Indian authorities against any risk of misuse or abuse thereof and, if so, where matters stand.

**Reply:** The DTA between India and Mauritius came into effect in 1983. The development of non-bank offshore business activities in 1992 in Mauritius coincided with the policy of economic liberalisation in India, where Foreign Financial Investors (FFI) were provided a number of incentives to participate in the Indian Capital market.

Over the past decade or so, the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius have been engaged in regular discussions on matters relating to the flow of investments between our two countries and the application of the DTA.

Several actions were taken by Mauritius to address the concerns of the Indian Authorities among which we note -

- (a) the Financial Services Commission (FSC) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) entered into a MoU for exchange of information;
- (b) companies investing in India from Mauritius may use the services of Indian auditors;
- (c) stringent conditions have been introduced by the FSC to ensure that Indian sourced funds are not reinvested in India through Mauritius;
- (d) the law has been amended to provide for wider exchange of information with Indian authorities;
- (e) the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters Act has been enacted, and provides for requests for judicial assistance notwithstanding the confidentiality provisions that apply to global business companies;
- (f) the law against money laundering was reinforced, and
- (g) the Mauritius Revenue Authority has been continuously providing relevant information, as requested from time to time by the Indian authorities.

As a follow-up to the ensuing dialogue between our two countries, a Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising of senior officials from both countries was set up in August 2006 to work on two important issues, namely -

- putting in place adequate safeguards to prevent misuse of the India Mauritius DTA without prejudice to the economic interests of either country, and
- strengthening the mechanism for the “Exchange of Information” under the India Mauritius DTA.

The JWG met on six occasions both in Mauritius and India. Discussions with the Indian authorities will continue, and the JWG will meet as and when required to sort out technical matters. To maintain effective coordination and liaison between both Indian and Mauritian tax authorities, the Government of India has just deputed an officer of the rank of Additional Commissioner of Income Tax to the High Commission of India in Port Louis.

The issues related to the DTA have been ongoing for quite a while and have been mentioned in the Indian press on many occasions. These issues were even raised in the Indian

Parliament. We are conscious of the uncertainty that this may cause to investors. In this connection, the Prime Minister and myself intend to have high level talks with our counterparts and the Indian authorities.

### **BANGLADESHI EXPATRIATES (MALE) – WORK PERMITS**

**(1B/130) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)**

asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Bangladeshi male expatriate workers he will state –

- (a) the number thereof whose residence and work permits have not been renewed for each of the years 2005 to date, and
- (b) whether it is a policy of the Government not to renew the said permits and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I am placing in the library of the National Assembly information on the number of residence and work permits of male Bangladeshi expatriates, which have not been renewed for the year 2005 to date.

I wish to inform the House that for a work permit to be renewed, there should, à priori, be an application to that effect from the employer. If no such application is received by my Ministry, the question of renewal does not arise and upon expiry of the current work permit, the company is required to make necessary arrangements to repatriate the worker.

However, there have been cases where in spite of there being an application for renewal of work permit, such applications have not been approved. My Ministry takes such a stand only in specific circumstances where, for instance, the workers have caused disturbance at their place of work, or are instigating other workers to breach their contract of employment or are flouting the conditions attached to their work and residence permits. I wish to point out that this is the usual practice at my Ministry and it is applicable to all expatriates, irrespective of their nationality.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that as far back as year 2001, a number of difficulties were encountered with Bangladeshi workers. These include use of fake passports and identity documents, fake work permits, involvement in criminal acts etc. Despite having reinforced the procedures regarding the

employment of Bangladeshis, the problem was not resolved completely. Recurrence of such cases was later noted over the years with a significant increase by the year 2007.

Consequently, a decision was taken in November 2008 not to allow Bangladeshi expatriates to work in the country. However, this decision was later reviewed and since then applications for female Bangladeshi workers are being processed as per normal procedures. As for male Bangladeshi workers, upon request from employers and where contracts of employment are valid, work permits are being renewed up to the date of expiry of their contracts.

### **PORT LOUIS MARITIME & PORT LOUIS EAST – TAXI STANDS**

**(No. 1B/131) 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 taxi stands in Constituency No.3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, a list thereof and their location, indicating if consideration will be given –

- (a) to placing of more visible taxi stand signs;
- (b) for provision of water supply and street lighting thereat, and
- (c) to regular cleaning and maintenance of the shelters.

**Reply:** I am informed by the National Transport Authority that the list of taxi stands in Constituency No 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, is as follows -

- (i) Plaine Verte Centre
- (ii) Nicolay Road, Plaine Verte
- (iii) Roche Bois
- (iv) New Transportation Centre
- (v) Emmanuel Anquetil Street

Taxi stand signposts are available at the above taxi stands except for Roche Bois.

With regard to parts (b) and (c), I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that street lightings are provided in most taxi stands. Moreover, a joint meeting is envisaged with the National Transport Authority, Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to discuss the provision of taxi stand signs, water supply and street lighting. The Council provides a regular cleaning service at all taxi stands.

**PRIEST PEAK HEALTH TRACK – *COMITE QUARTIER RUE LA PAIX* -  
REPRESENTATIONS**

**(No. 1B/132) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether he will state if he has received representations from the Comité Quartier Rue La Paix in regard to the bad state of the Priest Peak Health Track at Cité Martial and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** The Priest Peak Health Track set up at a cost of Rs8.2m. has been subject to repeated acts of vandalism since 2005. The Ministry carried out repair and upgrading works in July 2006 for the sum of Rs497, 000. The site was, however, subject to further acts of vandalism from December 2006 to January 2007. The site was closed in January 2007, and no further works were executed.

In April 2008, the Living Environment Unit carried out a survey to identify the required reinstatement works following acts of vandalism on site. Severe damages were observed such as completely burnt kiosks, damaged wooden handrail and fencing and dumping of animal waste. The cost for undertaking repairs was estimated at around Rs3 m.

In November 2009, representations from Comité Quartier La Paix, were received by the Ministry in regard to the bad state of the Priest Peak Health Track at Cité Martial. On 14 May 2010, my colleague, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, raised the issue of rehabilitating the health track with me, and my Ministry is presently working on appropriate remedial measures to be taken.

**VILLIERS RENE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RENOVATION WORKS**

**(No. 1B/133) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the

Villiers René Government School, he will state if during the renovation works presently being carried out thereat, the students thereof will be temporarily transferred and, if so, where.

**Reply:** It is not proposed to transfer pupils of Villiers René Government School during the present renovation works being carried out in the school.

### **SOCIAL HOUSING - PROJECTS**

(No. 1B/134) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to social housing, he will state the number of projects initiated and implemented on a yearly basis from 2006 to 2009, indicating the different sites concerned.

**Reply:** I am informed that the NHDC started the construction of 533 low cost housing units in October 2006 over six sites, namely at Rose Belle, Ville Noire, Rivière des Anguilles, Chebel, Bambous and Henrietta. These housing units have already been allocated to eligible beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the construction of 550 low cost housing units have already started last year over 11 sites, namely at Glen Park, La Tour Koenig, Petite Rivière, Roche Bois, Camp Diable, Plaine Magnien, Grand Bel Air, Britannia, d'Épinay, Cottage and Calebasses. These housing units are expected to be ready by February 2011.

When we talk of housing programmes, we should not lose sight of the Casting of Roof Slab Scheme, which was introduced by this Government in 1997. This Scheme was introduced precisely to assist low income earners who persevere to construct a house of their own, on land owned either privately or through leasehold rights. From 2006 to 2009, some Rs741.1m. have been disbursed to 14941 beneficiaries.