



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021

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BILL (*Public*)

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 20 of 2021

Sitting of Wednesday 23 June 2021

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

The National Anthem was played

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

The Prime Minister: 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 Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL**THE APPROPRIATION (2021-2022) BILL**

(NO. X OF 2021)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2021-2022) Bill (No. X of 2021) was resumed.

(11.36 a.m.)

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation was called.

The Chairperson: So, we shall process by sub-heading, starting with *16-101: General*, that is page 350, 351 until halfway page 352. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 351, Item 22900.916 – *Running Cost of Data protection Office*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether all the positions in that Data Protection Office have been filled?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, for the Data Protection Office, all posts are filled. If there is any specific post, the hon. Member wants to know?

Mr Uteem: Before they said that they had vacancy.

Mr Balgobin: All the posts are filled, Mr Chairperson. If you see in the HR report here, all the vacancies that we have are already in post.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 351, Item 26323.042 – *Mauritius Research and Innovation Council*, out of this Rs45 m. whether provision has been made for a restructuration to Rodrigues Branch of that Council?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision is made for Rodrigues Branch also and there is provision that has been made of Rs5 m. for special call for proposals for Rodrigues and Rodriguan Enterprises only and the call for proposal has already been launched with the closure date in May 2020.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Richard Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Concerning same Item 26323.042 – *Mauritius Research and Innovation Council*, can we know the cost of the Nano satellite and also the insurance cost?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, this item is for recurrent expenditure. It is not in this list. The Nano Satellite would probably come in the capital expenditure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 351, Item 22120.008 (a) - *Mauritius Digital Transformation Agency*. This Agency was announced, Mr Chairperson, in last year's Budget and I can see that Rs7 m. has been earmarked for this year. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the consultants have already been appointed, whether the contracts have been awarded and how this will be implemented?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, as rightly mentioned, this measure was announced in the Budget 2020-2021 with a view to speeding the digital transformation of Mauritius and we have at the level of my Ministry contacted International Experts, like Go-Tech of Singapore and Academy of Estonia and we have agreed on the proposal of Estonia and a Consultant of Estonia will be here shortly to design the whole structure and the whole plan for the MDTA.

The Chairperson: I can take a last question. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.042 – *Mauritius Research and Innovation Council*, the Capital Budget of the MRIC is Rs50.5 m., a major reduction compared to last year. Can we know the priority project in this limited budget?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, we have to understand why it is as such. In the financial year 2019-2020, there was an amount of Rs100 m. that was voted for the innovation fund. Out of this amount, Rs54 m. was used and we had another Rs80 m. in the current financial year. So, there is an amount that has been left - remaining amount of Rs36 m., that

is why there is a provision of Rs50 m. and when we add up the Rs36 m., it becomes more or less the same amount for this financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. We shall move to the next sub-head 16-102, page 352 until page 353.

Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regards to page 353 - item 31132.401 - *Intangible Fixed Assets - e-Government Projects of which (a) High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools*, can I know the name of the contractor who has obtained this contract?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the *High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools* is at the Central Procurement Board and the tender will be launched anytime soon. At this point in time, we do not have any supplier of this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, you have a question?

Mr Bhagwan: Page 351, item 26323.042 – Extra Budgetary Units, Mauritius Research and Innovation Council ...

The Chairperson: We have passed it. Your next item.

Mr Bhagwan: I will go to a next item.

The Chairperson: For page 352? Yes go on.

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, for page 352.

The Chairperson: Yes go on the lower half.

Mr Bhagwan: Okay.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I take the hon. Minister to page 353, Item 31132.401 *Intangible Fixed Assets - e-Government Projects of which (a) High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools*, when we look at last year's Budget, Rs60 m. has already been disbursed and yet the Minister comes and tell us that they are yet to enlist the services of a consultancy. It is a huge amount that has been committed.

Can the hon. Minister inform the House –

- (1) as to whom the contract has been allocated;
- (2) who is the Consultant, and

- (3) when is the project going to be implemented, because there is lot of expectation in the public in relation to this specific issue.

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, I did not say that we have recruited a Consultant. We have not said so. This Rs60 m. in this current financial year in fact; Rs100 m. was earmarked, Rs60 m. for this year and Rs40 m. for next financial year but that project was to put Wi-Fi connection in two Grades. During the course of the financial year, we had decided that we have to put Wi-Fi connection in all the schools and in all the classes. The project value was increased, we had discussion with my colleague and the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, we have finalised the new system of speed connectivity in the schools.

As I said, instead of two Grades, we are doing the whole school and all the Grades that is why the project value was increased. We have got approval of the Government for the increase in the price and this is where we did the specifications and it has been sent to the Central Procurement Board to launch the tender and eventually, a supplier will be appointed.

Dr. Boolell: I take it for granted hon. Minister, that all relevant information will be submitted as and when required.

Mr Balgobin: Sure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I shall take Hon. Dhunoo then hon. David and hon. Uteem then I will have three more names.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 352, item 22030 – Rent of *which Government Intranet Network System (GINS)*, an amount of Rs60 m. was budgeted last year and it has increased to Rs67 m., can we have a breakdown as to why from the Minister?

Mr Balgobin: This is provision made, Mr Chairperson, for accommodation of new and upgraded lines for the GINS (Government Intranet Network System) that connects all Government offices and Ministries so this is a provision made for that. Also, there is rental of building, the 4th floor at SICOM Tower, Ebène for the Central Informatics Bureau, rental of parking slots in Port-Louis, rental of facilities for events and as I said, the Government Intranet Network System which some equipment are coming end of life so it needs replacement as we go along.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 353, item 31132.401 -*Intangible Fixed Assets e-Government Projects of which (b) Certification Authority*, I can see that there was Rs20 m. earmarked last year, almost Rs11 m. this year, may I kindly ask the hon. Minister to remove a burden from my mind by confirming that this line has nothing with the intrusive solution; which was mentioned in the ICTA Consultation Paper, where it was mentioned a digital certificate issued by a Certification Authority.

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the Certification Authority, just to give you a quick background on the financial situation and then I will come with your answer, Rs50 m. was earmarked in the year 2019-2020, Rs20 m. was used. This current financial year, Rs20 m. has been used and the Rs10 m. remaining is at the completion of the project planned in this financial year. Now, the Certification Authority (CA) has nothing to do, as you mentioned, with ICTA. We are with Singapore, among the rare countries that are having their own Certification Authority.

Now, we are saying that all documents should be online, so you need to sign documents online and you need a digital certificate. Now, what we are doing is we are buying digital certificates from eMudhra in India i.e. people are using for e-procurement or any other matters. Now, Government will have their own CA, where public organisations can buy digital certificates to be used to fill in online documents.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 353, Item 31132.401 *Intangible Fixed Assets e-Government Projects of which (a) High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools*, a few years ago we had voted massively for the same project and the contractor DCL went into liquidation so, I would like to know from the hon. Minister is the amount budgeted going to replace the equipment already supplied by that contractor or can we use the equipment that we have already paid for and delivered?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we have to replace those equipment because the contract of DCL was back in 2014. In the meantime, you know the lifetime of an IT equipment is 5 years to 6 years, all the equipment that were placed in all the school at that material time have already come end to life or is not in use anymore.

As I said earlier to hon. Boolell and hon. Ramful, the new tender is at the Central Procurement Board and a new supplier will be appointed so because of a situation where we have supplier A providing for routers and switchers, supplier B providing for connectivity.

That is why - 2 reasons- first, it is end of life and secondly the new supplier will put all the equipment to provide connectivity.

Dr. Boolell: *Sawmynaden pas ladans li?*

The Chairperson: No, let us not go over there!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad then hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, you have one? Hon. Dr. Gungapersad, you have one?

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to move to page 353, item 22120.023 *Fees of which License Fees for Oracle Technical Support*, a provision has been made for Rs30 m., will the hon. Minister give us more details about that?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, there are various Oracle based system installed in various Ministries, Parastatal and Government. The Oracle technology products include the Oracle database, the internet development suite, reapplication cluster and Oracle forms and reports. So, this provision in increase is for payment of Oracle services and, at the same time, it is good to note that there have been fluctuations in the Dollar Rate, because we pay Oracle in dollars and also the annual inflation rate that they put in the contract is of 4%.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 353, *item 31132.401 – e-Government Projects, (a) High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools*; the project value was Rs170 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the percentage of secondary schools that are connected to the high speed connectivity, as very often there are claims that in some schools the connectivity is very poor?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, as at now, we do not have connectivity in secondary schools. Most probably the hon. Member is referring to some schools at their own cost have put a connection with either a dongle or download connection with the operators available on the market, but we have not connected secondary schools yet, and this is a big project coming for 155 schools all around the country, even in your constituency also, we will have connectivity in your schools.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Time over for this Sub-Head! We move to Sub-Head 16-103, pages 353 to 354. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. May I take the Minister to page 353, *item 22030 – Rent*. What a massive increase from last year’s Budget! Can the Minister give us a breakdown in relation to the Rs5,075,000?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, provision for rent here, the big part is for the Government Intranet System, as I have mentioned a bit earlier. Rs5 m. has been earmarked for rental of equipment to enable the running of the Government Intranet System. Well, I can explain the Government Intranet System, if the hon. Member has more questions.

Dr. Boolell: No, table the information!

Mr Balgobin: Yes, I can table the documents.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Page 354, *Item 31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment (c) Setting up of a cutting edge data store at CISD*. The project value is Rs6 m. Can we know the details about this project?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Chairperson. This project is linked with the first project in fact. We are in the view of doing an e-payroll for all Government servants, our colleagues. You would appreciate the fact that we have to print over hundred thousand payslips also every month, times 10 years in a year that makes a lot of paper. So, all the payslips will be online, they would access all these payslips online and to be able to manage the system, we need a proper Server Room and a Small Data Centre within the Central Information System Division (CISD). So, this provision is made to have these servers, local area networks, wiring, etc. for that item.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Coming to page 353, *item 22060 – Maintenance*, now that we are investing so much in these materials, hon. Minister, why is there a drop in the amount for maintenance?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the drop is due to the renovation work already effected in the Financial Year 2020-2021. So, there is not much to do in this current financial year, that is why there is a drop in maintenance, but I can give you details of the amount if you wish to.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 354, item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment (c) Setting up of a cutting edge data store at CISD*, can we have a status of the project?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, I just replied to the answer of my colleague.

The Chairperson: Next one. Hon. Leopold!

Mr Balgobin: I can say it again if you wish to.

The Chairperson: Now, just follow the proceedings.

Mr Leopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 353, item 31132.401 - *e-Government Projects, (a) High Speed Connectivity in Secondary Schools*. May we know how many secondary schools are involved for Rodrigues?

The Chairperson: Hon. Leopold, with all due respect...

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, it is good that I give an answer to this because it concerns Rodrigues. We have also included Rodrigues and all the secondary schools of Rodrigues will also be connected to internet. I think there are seven schools in Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I will move to pages 355 and 356. Any question? No question!

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Rs828,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.59 a.m.)

Vote 17-1 Labour, Human Resource Development and Training was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, are you ready?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: We will start with Sub-Head 17-101: General, which extends to pages 361 and 362 halfway.

Hon. Aumeer! Not this one? Hon. Uteem then!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Page 362, item 22900.967 – *National Wage Consultative Council*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the National Wage Consultative Council has made any recommendation with regard to the revision of the minimum wage?

Mr Callichurn: Which page? Item?

Mr Uteem: Page 362, the last item 22900.967, these are fees payable to the National Wage Consultative Council, so I am asking the hon. Minister, whether this Council has published any report, recommending any change with regard to the minimum wage?

Mr Callichurn: Well, Mr Chairperson, the national minimum wage, as it is known now, is being implemented since January 2018. Subsequently, it was reviewed and a new national minimum wage is effective as from January 2020. And, as per the National Wage Consultative Council Act, the national minimum wage is to be reviewed every five years.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Still on page 362, on *item 22030 – Rent*. There is a colossal amount, around Rs25 m. on rent. Can the hon. Minister inform the House if, instead of renting, if he can have his own building?

Mr Callichurn: Well, this is policy decision to take. Actually, we are renting spaces at Victoria House and several other buildings. We can have a look, but, unfortunately, we have to find buildings and all; construction, which entails additional budget.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. I can take hon. Ramful and then hon. Ameer Meea if I have time.

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 361, under item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*. I can see for Extra Assistance, there is a sum of Rs6,932,000 which was budgeted for last year and it has climbed up to Rs10,300,000. Can we have some details about this?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for the payment of salaries and allowances to Advisers of mine and two Officers, that is, the President and Vice-President of the Redundancy Board. If you want, I can table the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, page 362. I will come back to item 22030 – *Rent*. For this subheading, it is Rs6.7 m. The other one which hon. Woochit said was Rs26 m. which is another subheading. So, I will come back to the first one rent Rs6.7 m. May the hon. Minister give a list of what is being rented, where and details of the surface area and we don't need to visit it.

Mr Callichurn: The 8th and 9th floor of Victoria House of an area of 1,450 m² is being rented. Also we are renting parking slots, that is, at –

- Orleans Street – 12;
- Orleans Street again - 4, and
- Garden Tower, La Poudrière - 1.

The Chairperson: Done Minister? Thank you very much. We are done with the time. I move to the next sub-head 17-102, page 362 until half way page 363. Taking question, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I think I will come back to the same sub item 22030 – *Rent* where there is a colossal sum of Rs25 m. being used on average. Can the Minister provide details as whether it is to the rental of infrastructure or logistics and whom we are renting from?

Mr Callichurn: We are renting building spaces, Mr Chairperson, that is from the 1st to the 7th floor at Victoria House and then, Redundancy Board which is situated at Silvercrest Court. Also, we are renting another space at Silvercrest Court, that is, the 4th and the 7th floor and we have several Regional Labour Offices at Goodlands, Mahebourg, Pamplemousses, Rose Belle, Rose Hill, Saint Pierre and Triolet. If you want, I can table the list because the list is quite exhaustive.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I shall now take hon. Nagalingum, thereafter, hon. Dr. Boolell, then hon. Uteem and hon. Bodha. So, 4 already marked, please. Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, under item 22090 – *Security*, together with item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, may I know the names of the contractor?

Mr Callichurn: Item 22090, yes, it's alarm system being provided at the Regional Offices. The contractor is Brink's Mauritius Ltd and the contract is ongoing for a monthly amount of Rs400,830.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On page 363, may I take the Minister to item 26313.013 - *Manufacturing Sector Workers Welfare Fund* and item 26313.092 - *Trade Union Trust Fund*? The sum has been budgeted. Now, can I ask the hon. Minister as to how this fund is being managed and if he can give us a breakdown because there have been complaints registered from workers in relation to the dissatisfaction. I am not saying that they are right or wrong but can the Minister enlighten the House in respect of management of the two funds? Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, Trade Union Trust Fund, although budget is provided by the Ministry for their operation, they have their own objectives and we don't get involved in their day-to-day running and policy decision.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Dr. Boolell: Sorry, can I come back to that? I know because whether we like it or not, its taxpayers' money, without putting in doubt the goodwill of the workers but there have been complaints effectively from workers in relation to the management of the two funds. So, it's up to the Minister also to give us the appropriate information to ensure that there is no opacity, that everything is conducted in all transparency and there is good measure for accountability.

The Chairperson: I am sure the Minister took note of all that.

Dr. Boolell: Yes....

The Chairperson: This is not the time for statement. I am sorry, ...

Dr. Boolell: No...

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, on page 362, I take it under the item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. Since this heading deals with labour and employment relation management, may I know from the hon. Minister, the number of complaints referred to his Ministry last year, out of which the number which have been settled and the number which have been referred to Court?

Mr Callichurn: I don't have this information in the brief but if you come with a substantive question, I shall answer and provide the numbers.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Minister shall table. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to Capital Expenditure, item 31122.802 - (b) *Digital Court Recording System (for Redundancy Board)* at page 363? May I ask the hon. Minister what is the number of cases which have been heard during the year 2021 with the other cases which are pending?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, I will give you. Mr Chairperson, coming back to the last question, I've been provided with the figures, that is, the complaint received from expatriate workers –

- January to December 2019 stand at 666, and
- January to December 2020 at 533.

As regards to this question, Mr Chairperson, since November 2019 up to June 2021, the total number of cases before the Board is 247, out of which 233 cases have been disposed and 24 cases are in progress. The 247 cases concern 3,195 employees. Out of the 247 cases, there are 147 cases which concern 2,881 employees for reduction of workforce closure and 100 cases for application for reinstatement or severance allowance. And out of the 147 cases for reduction of workforce, closure of enterprises, 144 cases have been disposed of and 3 cases are in progress.

The Chairperson: Good. Thank you very much. Hon, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 363, item 31132.113 - *Computerisation of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could give us some details about the staff that is making up that Division, particularly who is at the head of it and whether there has been any companies or the number of companies that have failed to maintain the health and standard practice at work? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, the computerisation system will cater and support for activities and processes involved in the different units of the OSH Division of my Ministry and they are as follows –

- Employees Lodging/Accommodation Unit;
- Enforcement Unit;
- Construction Unit;
- Accident and Prosecution Unit;
- Special Support Services Unit, and
- Occupation Safety and Health Training and Information Unit.

The benefit of the project is that it centralises access to up to date information and gives a proximity service to all stakeholders and also it speeds up business processes and enhances the quality of service, gives more efficient and quick response to issues and opportunities by using customised dashboard.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Dr. Aumeer: May I just ask the hon. Minister whether there is a particular medical unit that is involved at the Occupational Safety and Health Division?

Mr Callichurn: Medical unit, there is none as such, Mr Chairperson, but we do work together with the Ministry of Health. If any issue arises, we do refer the matter to the Ministry of Health.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. No more questions under this Sub-Head? We proceed to *Sub-Head 17 – 103*, page 363 until quarter way page 364. Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, Item 28212.028 - *Employability Enhancement Programme (a) Youth Employment Programme (b) Women Back to Work Programme ...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Callichurn: No, no, you are going too far.

The Chairperson: Once again, let me just clarify for all Members. I draw your attention to what I am saying, please. I am proceeding through Sub-Heads; it is going to be easier for the Minister to reply to your question and you will have more questions if he does not have to go through all his files again and again. Now, I hope everybody knows as well, next time I am not going to allow the question itself. I think it is quite fair. So, we are on *Sub-Head 17 – 103* again. Question for this, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 364, under *Capital Expenditure*, Item 31132 .401 - *Computerisation of Registry of Associations*, may we know from the hon. Minister the status on this project?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, the computerised system at the Registry of Associations is operational since September 2016 and this budget provision has been made to cater for enhancement of the existing system including new modules to enable sharing of information with law enforcement agencies and institutions through the Information Highway Platform and this will improve the system by overcoming the operational constraints and generating additional statistical and management reports.

The Chairperson: Thank you, any more questions on *Sub-Head 17 – 103*? We are done. *Sub-Head 17 – 104*, page 364 until page 365. Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Page 364, last line Item 28212.028 - *Employability Enhancement Programme (c) Trainee Engineer Scheme*, can we have a list of the numbers of engineers, in which sector of engineering they have been recruited for the last year, 2021 and how many

the Minister expects to be employed during the coming financial year and the criteria of selection, how is it being done?

Mr Callichurn: Well, Mr Chairperson, the Trainee Engineer Scheme has been specifically introduced to enable professionals in engineering fields to be placed in public sector and private sector. For the period of 01 July 2020 – to 22 June 2021, 38 trainees have been placed in the public sector and 39 have been placed in the private sector. The existing batch of trainee engineers will pursue their traineeship for an additional year because the traineeship is for two years. 65 additional trainee engineers will be enlisted to undergo training in different fields in the coming financial year. So, the criteria is they have to be registered with the Ministry and fulfilling the minimum basic qualification that is required for traineeship under the scheme.

(Interruptions)

Procedure of recruitment, there is not a defined set of procedures of recruitment. For example, we have youngsters who did their engineering in telecommunication for example, so we do not have many in these categories.

The Chairperson: Thank you, I will take hon. Ms Anquetil, then hon. Lobine and then hon. Quirin.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same Item, page 364 Item 28212.028 - *Employability Enhancement Programme (b) Women Back to Work Programme. Peut-on savoir du ministre combien de femmes en ont bénéficié durant la dernière année financière ?*

Mr Callichurn: We have placed 114 women from 01 July 2020 to 22 June 2021 and we are proposing to place an additional 40 women for this financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 364, same Item 28212.028 - *Employability Enhancement Programme (a) Youth Employment Programme*, may we have more details as to this programme, how many years do those youngsters benefit from this programme and what is the follow-up after the termination of their Youth Employment Programme?

Mr Callichurn: Youth Employment Programme, Mr Chairperson, was introduced in 2013 if I am not mistaken and as at to date there are some – I am informed that the duration

in the private sector is one year and also with regard to the public sector, it is for two years. I have the details; the number of youth registered under this programme is 39,738, that is –

- HSC and above – 32,000
- No. of Youth placed in companies – 23,981
- No. of Youth not yet placed – 8241

We have a success rate, I need to admit, I stated it last time that once they completed their placement under the Youth Employment Programme, they manage to secure employment. The success rate is around 85%.

The Chairperson: Thank you, unfortunately time over on this item. Now, I move to Sub-Head 17-105, it is a short item and I will take 17-106 together. Is it good for you, hon. Minister?

Mr Callichurn: Yes.

The Chairperson: Two sub-heads. Pages 365 and 366. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Sub-Head 17-105, item 26323 .027 – *Extra Budgetary Units - Mauritius Institute of Training and Development of which (a) Equipment - Formation Professionnelle*, I would like to have the breakdown and I would like to have the list of equipment purchased under this item and the name of supplier or suppliers. Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: I undertake to table same, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I will take hon. Bodha, hon. Dhunoo and then hon. Bhagwan.

Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same item 26323 .027 – *Extra Budgetary Units - Mauritius Institute of Training and Development of which (a) Equipment - Formation Professionnelle*, can I ask the hon. Minister, the list of different courses which are available and the number of youngsters who have had access to this *Formation Professionnelle* during the last Financial Year? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Courses provided by the MITD, it is a long list, so if you want I can table it. It is a long list; if I go through it, it will take me 10 minutes. What do you want me to do hon. Bodha? I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo, please!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 365, under same item 26323 .027 – *Extra Budgetary Units - Mauritius Institute of Training and Development of which (b) Improvement/Refurbishment*, may we know from the hon. Minister, which centres are being improved and refurbished from the MITD?

Mr Callichurn: I do not have the information right now. I guess it is all the centres concerned.

The Chairperson: You will provide the answers later?

Mr Callichurn: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same sub-head, item 26313.027 – *Extra Budgetary Units - Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*, can we be provided with composition of the Board of the MITD, with the chairperson, members of the Board, and how much is paid to the Chairperson and the members separately, can we know? And the terms of contract, for how many years they have been appointed?

Mr Callichurn: I am informed that the Chairperson is Mr Harrykrishna Vydelingum, the Vice-chairperson is Mrs Hemadevi Boodadoo, and there is a representative from the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training who is the Assistant Permanent Secretary Mrs V. Boodhun-Luchumun. There is a representative also from my Ministry for subject matter of employment and a representative of Finance, two members from the private sector and two members who have wide experience in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, they are Mr Raj Auckloo and Mr Santaram Rago. The Chairman draws an allowance of Rs29,925 per month and members get an allowance of Rs2,000 per sitting.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister!

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, if you allow me, regarding the question that was asked earlier, I have been provided with the information as regard to the Centres which will undergo refurbishment, they are –

- (a) Clairfonds Training Centre;
- (b) Abercrombie Training Centre;
- (c) R. Bundhun;

- (d) Sir Kher Jagatsingh;
- (e) Mahebourg; and
- (f) Surinam.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! Hon. Lobine and then Hon. Ramful! Do you have a question? No, hon. Ramful then.

Mr Ramful: Same item - 26313.027 – *Extra Budgetary Units - Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*, can I know for MITD at Carreau Esnouf the number of courses that are run there and the number of students that are enrolled?

Mr Callichurn: Two courses. And they are Beauty Care and Hairdressing. The number of students is 25 each and 50 altogether.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I do not see any more names and hands raised, so we moved to pages 367, 368 and 369.

Hon. Ms Ramyad! You have a question?

Ms Ramyad: Page 368.

The Chairperson: Yes one second. Let me just clarify which page because I am taking questions for everyone. Page 367, 368 and 369.

Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Page 368, under SN (20) *Director, Occupational Safety and Health*, it was a funded post last year and this year we see that it is not a funded post, can the hon. Minister give some details?

Mr Callichurn: The post of Director is a promotional post from Deputy Director. One applicant has applied for a judicial review of the decision of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal and the appeal has been that the tribunal set aside the application and he has lodged an appeal against the appointment of the present incumbent, Deputy Director. So, the person is under acting ship.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Hon. Ms Anquetil, go on!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 367, Sub-Head 17-102, *No. (6) Director, Labour and Industrial Relations, peut-on savoir du ministre pourquoi ce poste n'est pas occupé depuis quelque temps ? Merci.*

Mr Callichurn: Well, Mr Chairperson, the former Director retired on 15 July 2020. The post is not funded as recourse to assignment of duties. There is someone who is acting so there is an acting ship to that post.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! Any more questions?

Vote 17-1 Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (Rs 880,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12:31 p.m.)

Vote 17-2 Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Let me just set out which sub-head I shall go through first and then we take it; I shall take Sub-Head 17-201 from page 373 to 374 quarter way, we end there.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 373, item 21110.005 – *Personal Emoluments - Extra Assistance*, may I know from the hon. Minister, what this amount relates to?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of basic salary, salary compensation, duty remission, car allowance, travelling allowance for one Adviser on Information Matter and I would not mention the name. The contract period is from February 2020 to February 2021, drawing a basic salary of Rs59,700 and an allowance of Rs15,365.

Mr Uteem: All the other Ministers stated the names of the Advisers.

Mr Callichurn: Can we? Yes, it is Mr Jean François Jérôme Consigny, Adviser on Information Matters.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Assirvaden! First one for the day, the first question!

Mr Assirvaden: Yes, Sub-Head 17-202, page 374. *Item 26313.008 - Competition Commission...*

The Chairperson: No, no! You missed it. You will have another opportunity later on.

Mr Assirvaden: Okay.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Dr. Boolell! No?

Dr. Boolell: No.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful! Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 374, item 22030 – *Rent*. I see that a budget of Rs2,330,000 was earmarked last year, and this year, there is no budget. Can you give a status?

Mr Callichurn: Provision for rent is now being centralised under the Vote, Sub-Head 17-202: Commerce and Trade Development. So, you have it after the last question.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. I can take just about two in the time available. Hon. Nagalingum and then hon. Lobine.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson. Page 374, Item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, can we have some more details about the contractor?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the cleaning services of washroom facilities. The contract was awarded to Keep Clean Ltd against a monthly payment following a tendering exercise. The contract took effect from Friday, 21 August 2020, and is valid up to 31 August 2021, renewable for a further period of 12 months upon satisfaction of the Ministry. The total amount for the 12 months is Rs38,640.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Kushal Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 374 under Sub-Head 17-202, item 26313.008 - *Competition Commission*, same item that hon. Assirvaden wanted to take under the Competition Commission.

The Chairperson: No, no! I have requested - follow the Sub-Head. We are not on that.

Mr Callichurn: The hon. Member is not following.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Let me sort it out! No more question on the past Sub-Head. We will move to Sub-Head 17-202 now. Everybody heard it, I am sure. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 374, item 26313.008 - *Competition Commission*, may I know from the hon. Minister why this increase in the budgeted sum? It was Rs27 m., it has jumped to Rs64.5 m, may we know why and may we get the composition of the Competition Commission, the Chairman and the Board members, please?

Mr Callichurn: Well, the increase in provision from Rs27 m. to Rs64.5 m. is due to COMESA merging fees, which amounts to Rs22.5 m. As you know, that's part of its mandate; the Competition Commission operates a Merger Control Regime for merging enterprises which notify transaction to the Competition Commission. Part of the fees are remitted to the Member States affected by the transaction in line with the methodology set out in the rules of the COMESA Review and also the increase is due to administrative costs.

The Chairperson of the Competition Commission is Me Mahmad Aleem Bocus; Vice-president is Mr Désiré Pierre Alberto Mariette; Commissioners: Me Candhayalallsing Seebaluck, Mrs Mariam Bibi Rajabally and Mrs Vedwantee Bikoo; Executive Director: Mr Deshmuk Kowlessur. Does that answer your question?

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, Minister. I will take hon. Assirvaden; secondly, hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger; thirdly, hon. Dhunoo and fourthly, hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Assirvaden: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Page 375, item 31122.804 - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. There is a substantial increase in the budget allocated. Can we know why and which laboratory are we talking about, and more details about the equipment, please?

Mr Callichurn: With regard to equipment, provision is made for purchase of IT equipment, that is, laptops in replacement of outdated, obsolete and low-performing computers for the officers of my Ministry. Presently, there are three Units comprising 34 officers who are working from home. So, they need to be provided with the right equipment.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 375, item 31122.804 - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. Can we have the list of equipment bought and who has been awarded the contract?

Mr Callichurn: It is with regard to marketing tools, to electronic weighing instruments having capacities of 60 kg and 12 kg; mass comparator, with a capacity of 1,500 kg and also for the renewal of state stamps and purchase of sealing wires. The second is for control of pre-packed commodities; and the third one is actually to replace actual defective mass comparator in the workshop of LMS indicator.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 374, item 22030 – *Rent*, which is being increased from Rs8,675,000 to Rs14,300,000 within a year. Can I ask the hon. Minister the reason for this increase in rent? Has it got to do with the Competition Commission increasing its activity, because in his reply just now, he did not mention that Competition Commission is recruiting more people, but the substantial increase is due for other reasons that he mentioned.

Mr Callichurn: Can you remind me of which item you are referring to, please?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 374, item 22030 – *Rent*. Also, may we know the name of the owner of the place from which it is being rented, and the reasons for that substantial increase in rent within a year?

Mr Callichurn: So, rent of office space in SICOM Tower, the Ministry currently occupies 31,275.88 square feet at a rate of Rs36.64 per square feet. And the duration of the lease agreement is for a period of 10 years starting from 01 August 2020 which will end at 31 July 2030. I need to add also, Mr Chairperson, the rental is revised every 3 years based on the CPI, Consumer Price Index and the first revision was applied as from 01 April 2021. The new rent has been increased from Rs36.64 per ft² to Rs37.54 per ft² which amounts to Rs1,174,096.54. And it includes syndic charges, parking slots and all.

Mr Osman Mahomed: But the increase is not proportionate with the figures that you have mentioned.

Mr Callichurn: Why that, Sir?

Mr Osman Mahomed: You said it is being increased by R 1 per ft² more but here it is being doubled almost from Rs8 m. to Rs14 m.

Mr Callichurn: It is as regards to the sq. ft. the total space that we rent and it is 31,275.88 ft²

The Chairperson: It is not time for debate in any event. Hon. Ramful, then hon. Uteem. If I have time, I will come hon. Nagalingum. Done! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I will come to this Competition Commission if you may, hon. Minister, it is Item 26313.008 - *Competition Commission Refund of COMESA Merger Filing Fees*, when we deduct the case of the refund for COMESA, there is an increase of Rs15 m. and it is the same amount in the following years.

May I know from the hon. Minister being given this substantial, almost doubling amount allocated to the Competition Commission, how many cases are investigated every year by the Competition Commission?

Mr Callichurn: Let me just get the answer. Annex 3. I am informed that from 2009 to date, there have been 260 enquiries made by the Competition Commission and it is forecasted that for next Financial Year, 24 enquiries will be initiated and for the current Financial Year, 25 enquiries, some are on-going and then some are forecasted to be heard.

As regards the investigations, 2009 to date, there have been 45 investigations carried out and for this Financial Year 2020-2021, 7 and it is forecasted that 5 investigations will be carried out in the next Financial Year.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, Minister. Hon. Deven Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I think we are done on page, Item 17-202. Item 17-203! No hand raised! We will move to page 376, 377. Hon. Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Page 377, Subhead 17-203, *Item 4 - Consumer Affairs Officer*, I can see that you have 27 officers. Can I know how many inspections they did during this current year? This is my first question. And the second question is: can I know how many contraventions they issued?

Mr Callichurn: 377 under Subheading 17-202.

The Chairperson: Is that correct? No. 4 - Consumer Affairs Officers.

Mr Callichurn: Number? Enfin je ne l'ai pas! Number of control checks at trade premises, I am informed that 17,012 checks have been carried out and total number of contraventions established 1,368 for different reasons, for different offences. Number of complaints also received from the Hotline, 3046 and total number of complaints registered, that is, including the Hotline and CAB: 3,124. There are other figures. I table it for your information.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Nuckcheddy!

Mr Nuckcheddy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Minister please provide a list of the shops which were contravened?

Mr Callichurn: It is difficult for me to provide the list of the shops.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Could you table it?

Mr Callichurn: I do not even know if we can do that because of Data Protection.

The Chairperson: Yes. It cannot be tabled right now when it has not been...

Mr Callichurn: You want to know whether a particular supermarket in Curepipe was contravened, no. I know, maybe.

The Chairperson: Alright!

Mr Callichurn: I am not prepared to do that.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: *Mo pa aktionaire laba.*

The Chairperson: Thank you for the information.

Vote 17-2 Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs177,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We will break for lunch for one and a half hours.

At 12.49 a.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.37 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: You may be seated!

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness was called.

The Chairperson: So, it is only the Chairperson who has changed but the procedures remain the same. So, we are going by Sub-Head 18-101: *General*. It starts from page 383 to 385.

Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Your first Meeting! Page 384, Item 22140 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, can the hon. Minister give us some details in order to avoid what has happened in the past financial year with regard to supply of masks, gloves and other equipment? How many are in stock, how much provision has been made for the coming financial year and the procedures for Procurement in order to avoid what has happened during the past months?

(Interruptions)

Drugs and Equipment! How much has been provided, the quantity in stock you have for gloves and masks which are very important in order to avoid the problem of the past?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this item is for the quality assurance of drugs. So, the question that the hon. Member has asked, this one will come up...

(Interruptions)

Yes. In this item, it is for the quality assurance of drugs, what we do whenever we have an adverse effect reaction. Now, you know we have to carry out some tests whenever some drugs are tested to have a reaction. That is the question for this. For the quality of the other drugs, it will come up in the next Sub-Head.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to Item 27210.008 – *Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius* to the tune of Rs90 m. Can the hon. Minister provide further details as to the number of patients that fall under this category, the breakdown in terms of specialities for which the services were requested and hospitals abroad from which our patients have benefitted?

Dr. Jagutpal: For the period 01 July 2020 to 18 June 2021, 190 patients benefitted from overseas treatment, amounting to Rs16 m. Now, the categories of patients that have been sent abroad for the different specialities and the hospitals, I am going to circulate it. It is a long list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 385, under Capital Expenditure, Item 31132.118 (a) – *Digitalisation of Hospital Service- e-Health*, may we know the status of this project?

Dr. Jagutpal: Can you just tell me if it is on page 385?

Mr Dhunoo: Page 385. Item 31132.118 – *Intangible Fixed Assets - Digitalisation of Hospital Services*.

Dr. Jagutpal: Just to remind the House that in 2019, the bid was launched but there was no responsive bidder. The Ministry along with the UNDP is providing consultancy services for revision of the technical specifications and preparation of the tender documents,

which is expected to be finalised in July 2021. Thereafter, the tender will be floated and the project is expected to start in this financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Mr Chairperson, can we go back to page 383, *sub-head 18-101: General, item 21110.005 – Personal Emoluments – Extra Assistance*, can the Minister elaborate on this, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this one is for the payment of salaries to officers on contract. I will broadly give the names –

- (a) Dr. Gaud;
- (b) Mrs Bhujun-Kutowaroo, Civil Engineer;
- (c) Mr Sookdan, Engineer in Biomedical;
- (d) Mr Jhugroo, National Dialysis Coordinator;
- (e) Dr. Jhugroo, Doctor in Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction, and
- (f) Mr Kavish Pultoo, Senior Adviser in Policy and Communication.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: I am referring to page 384, item 26313.037 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Institute of Health*, there is a budgeted amount of Rs21.5 m., May we have more details please as to how this institute functions?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision for the operational expenses of the Mauritius Institute of Health, this is the training arm of the Ministry. It regulates bids for international consultancies which, besides generating income, also increase the visibility of the Institute and its professional staff, organisations which have offer to consultancies. There is a list of training that is being conducted by this institution especially for the training of the staff of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Chairperson: We move to sub-head 18-102. We will start from the bottom half from page 385 to page 387.

Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Thank you. M. le président, page 386 - Item 22140 –*Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment* - à la hauteur de 1.5 milliards 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23,

2023/24, est-ce que dans ces équipements, M. le ministre, ce n'est pas précisé parce que c'est vaste, les ventilators qu'on avait achetés en 2020, est ce qu'on les a reçus ? C'est en marche, c'est okay? Est ce qu'on peut avoir des renseignements concernant les *Estimates* de 2020 ?

Dr. Jagutpal: I will first refer to provision made for this amount quoted here, the details are for the purchase of drugs and vaccines. Concerning the ventilators, the supplier of the ventilators has agreed to take back the ventilators and the Ministry is doing the process.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 386, item 22140.001 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment – Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, which costs every year more than Rs1 billion. Some time back, there was a proposal from the Director of Audit to have a fully computerised system for the stock level of drugs and medicines in order to determine stock reorder level and expiry date. Has this measure been fully implemented by your Ministry?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this measure will be implemented in this present Budget later on. There is a financial provision made for a new warehouse. The new warehouse will cater for the digitalisation of the whole process. Until we do not digitalise the whole stock of the medications we have, at the same time, digitalise the procurement process then, we will be able to sort out this problem as per the Audit's report.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 386, item 31112.003 - *Non-Residential Buildings – Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which –*

- (a) *New ENT Hospital;*
- (b) *New Flacq Teaching Hospital (Phase 1), and*
- (c) *New Cancer Centre*

Can we have status from the hon. Minister with regards to work in progress and completion? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: In this we have 3 projects. In fact, you will see that there is the New ENT hospital, the New Flacq Teaching Hospital and New Cancer Hospital.

For the new ENT hospital, that project has already been completed but there is a retention money that is still here. For the new Flacq Teaching hospital...

The Chairperson: Excuse me, hon. Minister, hon. Doolub will you please precise if you want details for all the hospitals or for a specific one?

Mr Doolub: Yes, for all three.

Dr. Jagutpal: So, I will be very brief. For the new Flacq Teaching hospital, the project started in September 2020 and is expected to be completed in 2023 and with a contract value of Rs2.639 billion. New Cancer hospital, completion date will be in the beginning of next year 2022 and the amount already paid is Rs550 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On page 386, item 26323.095 - *Extra Budgetary Units – Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*, with a slight increase in the sum budgeted for financial year 2021-2022, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to how this fund is being allocated in relation to specialised medical care? And, whether - I am not going to say there have been recent complaints in respect of management but what is being done at the level of the Ministry in the light of the amount earmarked to ensure that there is proper allocation and the resources are used judiciously to meet expectation? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, the provision for payment of salaries, this budget is amounted for the salaries of staff, operational expenses. Briefly, if I have to just remind the House that there were –

- (a) 681 cardiac surgeries done during the past financial year;
- (b) 395 vascular surgeries;
- (c) 1,580 angiography, and
- (d) 502 angioplasty.

So, all that the budget for the salaries were Rs228 m. and for other utilities, Rs15.6 m. This means that this Trust Fund is functioning properly and whatever be the outcome of that is already stated.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 387, item 31112.003 - *Non-Residential Buildings – Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which (e) New Cardiac Centre at Cote d’Or*, there is a project value of Rs1.1 billion, can the hon. Minister provide

more details as whether the plot of land has already been identified at Cote d'Or and when construction of same will start?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, yes a plot of land has already been identified at Cote d'Or. Recently we have signed the agreement with Landscape Mauritius and now we are going ahead with the project. The New Cardiac Centre will have new specialities such as –

- (a) paediatric congenital cardiac surgeries;
- (b) interventional paediatric;
- (c) congenital cardiology;
- (d) interventional and open vascular surgery;
- (e) thoracic surgery;
- (f) electrophysiology;
- (g) round the clock Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI), and
- (h) all the different facilities.

Now, the project will be starting and we have to start with all the different steps of the project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 386, item 31112.003 – *Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which (c) New Cancer Centre*, at a project value of nearly Rs1.6 billion and Rs800 m. budgeted for year 2021-2022. Can we know from the hon. Minister where matters stand with regard to this project?

Dr. Jagutpal: Contract for the construction and renovation of this Cancer Hospital was awarded in 2018. Works started and the completion date will be by end of this year or till the beginning of next year. The total amount paid is Rs550 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: On page 387, for item 31122.801 – *Acquisition of Medical Equipment*. Can we have a list of the medical equipment under this item?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made for high-tech medical equipment, anaesthetic machines, and other medical equipment for all the regional hospitals. I can provide the list of equipment; I can circulate it.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 387, item 31112.403, (c) *Flacq Hospital*, that is, Bruno Cheong Hospital, in the constituency of the Deputy Chairman of Committee. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this sum makes provision for a scanner, a CT scan and MRI machine, because I was there some time ago and I was told that although people who need these services in case of accident, they have to be transported to other hospitals for these essential services and this is very dangerous.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, the different equipment will be installed in the new Flacq Hospital that is coming up in the next 2-3 years.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Page 386, item 31112.003 – *Construction/Extension of Hospitals, of which, (c) New Cancer Centre*. Can we know the name of the contractor?

Dr. Jagutpal: For the New Cancer Centre, the contractor is Swadeshi Company.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, I can see that there is an amount of Rs117 m. Can we have an indication with regard to the contractors who have supplied those services?

Dr. Jagutpal: For Cleaning Services, the contract is awarded to Mauriclean Ltd for the sum of Rs105.5 m. for a period of two years, starting from 01 January 2020.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Sorry, which page?

Mr Chairperson: The same. Okay, we move to hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On pages 386 and 387, under Capital Expenditure, for items 31112.003 - *Construction/Extension of Hospitals, of which, (e) New Cardiac Centre at Côte d'Or* and 31122.801 – *Acquisition of Medical Equipment* respectively. May we know from the hon. Minister in which of these items do we have additional equipment for angioplasty and PET scan machine, if any.

Dr. Jagutpal: For the angioplasty and the PET scan machine, it will be under *item 22140 – Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 386, item 22140.002 - *CT Scan and MRI Fees and Materials*. Can the hon. Minister give details regarding these fees and materials?

Dr. Jagutpal: CT Scan and MRI Fees and Materials: Provision for the purchase of films, consumables for CT scan and MRI. And then, payment to private clinics to which patients are referred to and when hospital equipment is out of order.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Page 385, Item 21110.013 - *Allowance icw Internship (Pre-Registration Training)*. Last year, a sum of Rs68 m. was budgeted and this year the estimated budget is Rs104 m. Can the hon. Minister tell us the number of pre-registration trainees, doctors who were in this programme last year and what is the expected number for the coming year and can he table the names of all those who are eligible under this Pre-Registration Training? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, allowance payable is Rs25,525 per month, as recommended by PRB. They are also entitled to refund of bus fares. 245 doctors were enlisted in September 2020 and 100 to be enlisted in Financial Year 2021-2022. The number has increased now because we have more doctors on the market that we should give training. I will table the list of doctors.

The Chairperson: We now move to Sub-Head 18-103: Primary Health Care and Public Health, which starts from the second half of page 387, page 388 full page, and then, the first half of page 389. Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Page 388, item 22090 – *Security Services*. There is a substantial increase from Rs8.5 m. to Rs10 m. Can the Minister explain?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision made to meet payment of security services for some Area Health Centres and Medi Clinics. Letters of Award have been issued on 02 June 2021 to a company called RSL Security Services, for Health Regions 1, 2 and 3 and the budget is Rs86.9 m.; Top Security Services Ltd. for Health Region 4: Rs29.2 m.; Edmond Security Services for Health Region 5: Rs41.1 m. and Rapid Security Services for other health institutions: Rs12.6 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 388, item 31112.004 – *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC), (a) New Henrietta AHC*. Can the Minister tell us in regard to the tender process where matters stand? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Project will be financed under a grant of USD 8 Million from the Government of India. Land is being identified by the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning. So, we are still at this stage of identifying the land.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Page 388, item 22120 – *Fees of which Setting up of a Food Standards Agency (Consultancy)*. Can we have more details about this agency, how many times they met and the members of the agency, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: It's page 388?

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.

Dr. Jagutpal: So far, the WHO has already enlisted a Consultant who is presently working on establishing the Agency as well as the legislation to set up the legal framework and appropriate powers for its proper functioning. So, it's only the Officers of the Ministry of Health and Wellness with the WHO consulting is working on this project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 389, under item 31112.006 - (e) *Chemin Grenier Mediclinic*, can the hon. Minister state in regard to the tender process where matters stand, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the project again is funded by the Government of India. Letter of exchange has been signed on 22 February 2021. A new plot of land was identified adjacent to the Engen Filling Station along the B10 Road, Chemin Grenier. The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning has initiated action for acquisition. So, we are still at the stage of acquisition of land.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 389, under item 31112.005 - (c) *Grand Bay CHC*, regarding construction of the Grand Bay Community Health Centre, will the Minister give us an update about it?

Dr. Jagutpal: Grand Bay Community Health Centre. So, the Letter of Award has been issued to Awan Enterprise Ltd. on 24 August 2020. Contract value amounts to Rs32,442,700. Contract Agreement has been signed on 14 October 2020. Duration of work is 300 calendar dates as from the start. Works started on 01 December, expected to be completed on 26 September. Works completion is 12% as at 25 May 2021.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Page 388, under item 31112.004 - (d) *New Plaine Magnien AHC*, can we have more information about it?

Dr. Jagutpal: More information on the new...

Mr R. Duval: Construction of New Plaine Magnien AHC.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes.

Mr R. Duval: .004.

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the New Plaine Magnien. Project will be financed again under the grant of USD 8 m. from Government of India. Revised cost estimates submitted by HSCC is Rs77 m. So, still at the stage of finalising the cost of the project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. So, on page 388, item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, I am sure the hon. Minister must have read the criticism of the Director of Audit on procurement exercise of Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment. Therefore, can I ask him if his Ministry has reviewed the procedures of tender exercise, delivery clause, payment procedures in relation to what the Director of Audit has said?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, I think the tender procedures, tender exercise, the procurement is well established, unless there is any flaws into that, I would welcome the hon. Member to just point it out to me.

Mr Ameer Meea: You should read the Report.

The Chairperson: Let me take another one, hon. Doolub! No. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 388, under Capital Expenditure, item 31112.004 - (f) *Curepipe AHC*, can we have a status on this one? Why no money has been projected for this project?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, this is a new project. Provision for the project preparation made under the Centrally Managed Initiative of Government. So, vote 24-1. The Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development has recommended that the building be pulled down and a new one be constructed on the same site. The project will accommodate a AHC and the Health Office. So, all this is in the pipeline.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, Item 22900.982 - *Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, can I know from the hon. Minister details and a breakdown and how many...

The Chairperson: Which page you are?

Mr Juman: 390.

The Chairperson: We are not there yet. You are moving too fast. There are speed cameras, just beware. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Juman: Page 390, the first part. It's the same.

Mr Quirin: On page 389, acquisition of non-financial assets with regard to item 31112.006 - (b) *Coromandel Mediclinic*, can we know if the contract has already been awarded? If so, the name of the contractor and the expected completion date, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: In relation to the acquisition of the assets, so far what I have, is the progress of the work is 34% as at 14 June. Yet, I don't have any information on the acquisition of the other equipment. If I'll have it, I'm going to forward it.

Mr Quirin: No, my question relates to Coromandel Mediclinic.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, the contractor?

Mr Quirin: Yes. Whether the contract has already been awarded?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the contractor is Kanakiah Associates Co. Ltd. The handing over was carried on 15 January. Contract value Rs84,349,820. The started date was 29 January 2020. Revised completion date is in August 2021. Progress of work is 34% as at 14 June 2021. *C'est tout?*

The Chairperson: Next subheading 18-104, start from page 389, the bottom part and ends at the first half of 390. Hon. Mrs Tour! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On page 390, item 22900.915 - *Multi-sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*. I was quite surprised to read that there is a high prevalence rate of HIV of more than 1%. So, if the Minister will be kind enough to apprise us as to the programme that is being implemented, what it entails? So, if he would be kind enough to circulate the information if it is too long. Thank you very much.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. I will give all the information for the Multi-sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme. So, there is a budget for that. The new grant for the period of 2021-2023, amounting to USD 2,265,000 that is around Rs90 m. was signed between the Global Fund and the Ministry of Health and Wellness on December 2020. This amount includes Rs26,000 to be allotted to pills which have been selected as the NGO sub recipient and the remaining Rs63.2 m. will be allotted to the Ministry of Health. Payment under global fund includes, among others, procurement of male and female condoms, condom vending machines, rapid HIV test kits, reagents, viral load reagents, needles, syringes and alcohol swabs.

Now, Rs4 m. is being provided for harm reduction activities, including YEPAD Programme and activities related to World Aids Day and International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. I will table the document.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, under the same Item 22900.982 - *Other Goods and Services of which Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, can we have more details?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. So, provision has been made for sensitisation and awareness campaigns on synthetic and other drugs targeting mainly the youth in and out of schools as well as in the community. So, the details of the project would be a budget of Rs8.5 m. being earmarked for Synthetic Drug Prevention Programme for this year, out of which Rs7.75 m. earmarked for mass media campaign and the remaining amount for workshop.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, Item 22900.982 - *Other Goods and Services of which Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, may we have a breakdown of how many people are being treated with this problem of synthetic drugs in our hospitals, Brown Sequard Mental Hospital and the other hospitals? Do you have the statistics?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, I will table all the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, Item 22900.915 - *Other Goods and Services of which Multi-sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*, can the hon. Minister tell us if this programme includes the PREP Service also?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, it will include this PREP service also.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, again on Item 22900.982 - *Other Goods and Services of which Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, the hon. Minister has mentioned just now it is going to be mostly about sensitisation. Can I ask him whether those patients admitted at Brown Sequard Hospital whether it is being catered for them, a dedicated rehabilitation ward at that hospital because from my understanding which I had explained in my discourse on the Budget, they are admitted together with other psychiatric patients and this is not quite too good because they suffer other traumas after coming out of the hospital from that particular ward.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, 26 June is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. On that occasion, there will be a new ward opening at Brown Sequard Hospital to give treatment for all those suffering from illicit drugs, synthetic drugs, all that for rehabilitation purposes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Since we are on the synthetic drug, I will take it here again under Item 22900.982 - *Other Goods and Services of which Synthetic Drugs Prevention*, the amount of Rs8.5 m., we all know the havoc that has been created by the synthetic drug, by this new type of drug. Does the Minister not think that the sum of Rs8.5 m. is not sufficient to combat such a disease if I can say, in Mauritius?

Dr. Jagutpal: To combat synthetic drugs, which is a multi-sectoral issue, that has to be dealt by the different stakeholders. So, this Ministry has this budget and we will spend it efficiently in doing our sensitisation and rehabilitation programme.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you. Page 389, Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the amount that is earmarked for the Harm Reduction Unit, its staffing level and the relative purview of their work since they have now replaced NATReSA?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the Ministry of Health has a specialised unit, the Harm Reduction Unit together with the Addiction Unit that have to specifically deal with such problems. After the NATReSA issue, the Ministry of Health does a lot of work with the NGOs and we are being able to deliver our services. It is also in collaboration with the NGOs.

Dr. Aumeer: The emoluments of the Harm Reduction Unit, the staffing which has been brought down to approximately, if I understand, five staff only. So, are they all included in that Rs24,950,000?

Dr. Jagutpal: I will circulate the paper about the breakdown of the figures for the staffing.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, again the same item 22900.982 - *Other Goods and Services of which Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, will the hon. Minister table the number of campaigns which have been carried out in primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions over the last year? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I will table all the campaigns that have been done during the last year till now.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Page 390, Item 22900.903 - *Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign...*

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Nagalingum: Page 390, Item 22900.903 - *Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign*, can we know from the hon. Minister how many campaigns have been held and which one?

The Chairperson: We are still on *Sub-Head 18-104*. Okay, we will move to next Sub-Head then, *Sub-Head 18-105*, it starts from page 390, it goes up to page 401. Hon. Assirvaden !

Mr Assirvaden: Merci, *Mr Chairperson*. M. le ministre, à la page 391, Item 11 *Chief Pharmacy Technician* et 12 *Quality Control Pharmacist/Chemist*, alors que le ministère achète autant d'équipement, de médicaments, de vaccins, comment est-ce possible que le *Chief Pharmacy Technician* et le *Quality Control Pharmacist/Chemist*, il n'y a rien pour 2021 et 2022 ?

Dr. Jagutpal: Chief Pharmacy Technician and Quality Control Pharmacist/Chemist.

Mr Assirvaden: Justement *Quality Control Pharmacist*.

Dr. Jagutpal: We do not have any officers for quality control because we do send the drugs for quality control to an agency to do the testing.

Mr Assirvaden: Outsourcing?

Dr. Jagutpal: Outsourcing, exactly!

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 390, Item 22130.007 - *NCD related studies and surveys*, an increase to the tune of Rs13 m. Can the hon. Minister explain the need for increased surveys and studies?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, provision is made for the conduct of studies and surveys for NCD in Mauritius. The NCD service is carried out every five year, the last time that the NCD was carried out was in 2015, delay was due to COVID-19. The survey will help to define prevalence of NCD. Now, for the details of the survey, last year, the Rs2 m. was spent on the following –

- (i) The Mauritius Intensive Diabetes Action Study (MIDAS),
- (ii) The prevention programmes for the development and evaluation of a Technology-Assisted Diabetes Prevention Programme in Mauritius.

For this year, we will be doing the survey and that will amount us to this sum of money.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Mr Chairperson, page 390, please. Item 22900.903 – *Other Goods and Services of which Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign*, with a budget of Rs18 m. May we have more details as to this campaign, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made to meet expenditure on campaigns for the prevention of NCDs, including Tobacco Cessation Clinic through the MBC and private radios. Contract with the MBC amounts to Rs18 m. for a year. A series of 10 programmes will be carried out in collaboration together with the Prime Minister's Office.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Page 391, SN 17 - *Principal Health Information, Education and Communication Officer*, I see nothing has been earmarked.

Dr. Jagutpal: Nothing has been earmarked, funds have not been provided. It will be in the next budget.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 390, item 31132.801 – *Intangible Fixed Assets - Acquisition of Software*, can I know from the hon. Minister where we stand with the e-Health implementation?

Dr. Jagutpal: The e-Health implementation, I have already given the project value and where status is. Just to briefly remind it again, the project is at the stage with the UNDP because we are finalising the different specifications; once this is finalised with the UNDP, we are going to launch the tender.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Again coming to item on page 390, item 31132.801 – *Intangible Fixed Assets - Acquisition of Software*, Rs900,000 was budgeted last year, can we know what is this software about and what is the implementation status of this software? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: The Ministry in collaboration with Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai and Mauritius Telecom is conducting a study on development and evaluation of a Technology Assisted Diabetes Prevention Programme in Mauritius, SMS study to evaluate the impact of text messaging, SMS messages for the prevention of diabetes in the Mauritian population who are at high risk of developing diabetes. Moreover, for the SMS gateway service a once-fee of Rs10,000 was paid and a monthly rental of Rs4,000 is paid so that is the expenditure.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Page 391, Human Resources, *HIEC Cadre SN 20 – Director, Health Promotion and Research – SN 21 – Chief Health Promotion and Research Coordinator*, while last year there was no budget earmarked for the Director; this year it is being earmarked. Can the hon. Minister tell me whether –

- (a) it is not one of the same person, and
- (b) the scheme of duties of the Director, *inter alia* the Chief Health Promotion and the salaries that they receive, please.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, the post has been earmarked now. I cannot tell you who will be the Director and the scheme of service I am going to table.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. À la page 396, *SN 129 – Psychiatry Rehabilitation and Welfare Officer/Senior Psychiatry Rehabilitation and Welfare Officer (Male)* and *SN 130 – Psychiatry Rehabilitation and Welfare Officer/Senior Psychiatry Rehabilitation and Welfare Officer (Female)*, je vois que pour la dernière année financière il n’y avait pas de psychiatre homme, mais il y avait deux psychiatres femmes et 5 nouvelles psychiatres femmes et 5 nouveaux psychiatres hommes sont prévus pour cette année financière. Mais dans le *summing-up* de son discours pour le *Mental Health Care (Amendment) Bill* le ministre avait dit qu’il y avait 12 psychologues dans son ministère. Je ne les vois nulle part, est-ce qu’il peut m’éclairer si il y a des psychologues et si oui, où sont-ils dedans ?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, yes, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has employed psychologists and we have requested for more posts of psychologist and the psychologists are posted not only at Brown Sequard Mental Healthcare Centre but also at the different hospitals. They are providing services to the hospitals, to the patients admitted in the

hospitals, and also on outpatient basis. The number, I do not have it with me, but I am going to table it. The number, I am sure it is around 10, but the exact number I am going to table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo, you still have a question?

Mr Dhunoo: Page 390, item 31132.801 – *Intangible Fixed Assets - Acquisition of Software*, may I know to whom the contract has been allocated?

Dr. Jagutpal: Acquisition of Software - The patients under statistics treatment. So, I do not think that we have a contract allocated to somebody because this is in collaboration with the Chennai Diabetes Research Foundation and the Mauritius Telecom.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 391, if I can refer the hon. Minister to Sub-Head 18-101 *General, (26) – Chief Demographer and (27) – Demographer*, since the demographic changes were mentioned in the Budget and I would like to know whether studies have been conducted by the Demographers to assess disease trend in an ageing workforce in relation to communicable and non-communicable diseases? So, the Minister can apprise us as to the relevance and importance of Demographers?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, for the communicable and non-communicable diseases, as I have stated earlier, that the NCD survey will be taking place this year. The Chief Demographer and the Demographer are working on a series of projects and I am going to table the series of projects that they have conducted during the last year.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness (Rs13,100,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.31 p.m.)

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping was called.

The Chairperson: Again, we are going by the sub-headings; we start by Sub-Head 19-101.

Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le ministre, à la page 407 à l’item 22900.970 – *Other Goods and Services of which Management of Coastal Zones (UNDP/GEF Funded)*, R 52 millions pour

2020, R 15 millions pour 2021 et R 15 millions pour 2022. Peut-on avoir des détails concernant ce *Management of Coastal Zones* ?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, this is a project which has been funded by the UNDP under the UNDP-GEF Funded Programme to the tune of Rs185 m. The project duration is 2017-2022. As at today, Rs110 m. have been spent on this item and the percentage of the project completed is 65% and amount remaining is Rs74.7 m. In fact, this project seeks to mainstream the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Coastal Zone Management. The Minister of Blue Economy is the implementing partner of the project and other Ministries involved are the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, and of Rodrigues Regional Assembly also. So, it is going to be completed in 2022.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 407, item 22120. 008 - *Fees to Consultants (EU Funded)*. May we have the names and qualifications of these consultants, and other details as well?

Mr Maudhoo: The fee to consultants is again under the EU-FPA. In fact, in 2020-2021, a sum of Rs5.6 m. was provided for the recruitment of a consultant in Biotechnology for a period of two years. The advertisement was carried out by the Ministry and the assistance of the EU was sought. However, recruitment could not be effected in spite of international advertisement as this is a scarcity area. But I wish to inform the hon. Member that EU has approved the request for my Ministry to use the funds earmarked for last year, that is, Rs5.6 m. to provide assistance to fishers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte! Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 407, item 22900.970 *Management of Coastal Zones (UNDP/GEF Funded)*, there was a question already raised by my hon. colleague. This project relates exactly to Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the Management of Coastal Zones in Mauritius. The Minister has talked already about it, but one outcome of this study, Mr Chairperson, is the updated mapping of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas, for which we are waiting desperately, I must say. Can the hon. Minister state whether this updated mapping is ready, and if so, why is it that it is not yet available to the District Councils which need this document, for instance, to deliver Building and Land Use Permits? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: The mapping is still being conducted, but as per information, I can see the breakdown of expenses of the mainstreaming biodiversity. Mapping was done into 19 to 20 and payment of consultancies has already been done. I will check and table that.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 407, under item 26323.040 - *Mauritius Oceanography Institute of which Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)/ Africa Support Programme (AU Funded)*. Can we have more details about this programme from the hon. Minister?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this is the GMES and Africa is an initiative contributing to the earth observation, which will, in fact, help most of the fishers and the Earth Observation Domain of the African Outer Space Flagship Programme. It is an EU-funded project. It builds on the existing projects in the continent that have general intellectual and infrastructural capacities in use for EU application to enhance decision-making in environmental management through provision of evidence-based information.

So, the MOI is the lead institution in the consortium setup to implement the GMES Africa Marine and Coastal Management Service for the Africa Region. The overall objective of the project is to promote a more sustainable management of marine and coastal resources by improving decision-making process through provision of additional pertinent information obtained and analysed from the Earth Observation Data.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you. Page 407, item 26313.040 - *Mauritius Oceanography Institute of which Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)/ Africa Support Programme (AU Funded)*. Can we know from the Minister about the management of the institute? *On nous demande de voter R 83 millions*. May we know who is the Chairperson of the Institute? Who managed the institute as General Manager, what are the terms and contracts, how much they are being paid, and also the Board members of the Institute?

Mr Maudhoo: The composition of the MOI, the Chairperson is Mr Nadeem Nazurally, Senior Lecturer at the University of Mauritius. I can see that most of the members are ex officio, that is, most of them are representatives of Ministries. The Chairman has a monthly allowance of Rs29,000, and the Board members, only Rs12,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to Sub-Head 19-102: Shipping, which starts from the bottom half page of 407 and ends at page 108. Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 408, under item 22090.007 - *Security of which Maritime Communications Services*. There is an amount of Rs29.5 m. last year and this year and for the next two years as well. Can we have more information on this system, whether it is a project? May we have some more information, please? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, Mauritius is party to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and as a contracting State, Mauritius has a duty to provide the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) services and this provision is mainly for Mauritius Telecom. Provision for payment of Maritime Communication Services, which is used in Search and Rescue Operation for more than a decade now; the service provider is Mauritius Telecom.

Dr. Boolell: Can you table this information?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 408, item 22120 - *Fees of which Preparation of Yatch Codes for Mauritius*. May we know how Rs1.6 m. was spent and how one more million will be used for this current year?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this is for preparation of Yatch Codes for Mauritius. So, provision for remaining payment of consultancy is 40% for 2021-2022. In fact, there is a contract for drafting of Codes of Standards for Yatch Codes, namely A, B, and C in commercial, in private use awarded to IMO resource person, namely, Professor Dr. Prasanta Mukherjee, on 12 December 2019.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 408, Item 25210.002 - *Non Financial Private Enterprises - Ferry Boat Operators*. Are these the same persons working at *Grande Rivière Sud Est*? The Ferry boat operators!

Mr Maudhoo: Yes. This is...

Mr Bhagwan: How many are they? How many boats? Can we know whether the request for an increase has been approved?

Mr Maudhoo: The operators.

Mr Bhagwan: How many are they?

Mr Maudhoo: This is a free boat service as you know. It is provided to public for crossing the river from *Deux Frères* to *Grande Rivière Sud Est* and vice versa all around. Presently, there is one Mr Ramduth Manohar who is providing the service from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, including public holidays. The procurement for a new contract is in process, but as at today he is still there, up till 30 June 2021.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under the same item 22120.002 – *Fees of which Preparation of Yatch Codes for Mauritius*, the Rs1 m. is the last budget earmarked for this project. Will the Yatch Codes be ready by the end of this Financial Year?

Mr Maudhoo: For the Yatch Code, yes this year, it is okay, it will be ready.

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden! Even if you are at the back, I can see you.

Mr Assirvaden: *Yes, Sir, hopefully.* J'ai dû gratter votre dos en plusieurs reprises. M. le ministre, à la page 408, à l'item 22090.007 – *Security of which Maritime Communications Services*, avec un budget de R 29 millions pour les 3 ans. Donc, ce *Maritime Communications Services*, ce sont des équipements, des *services* pourquoi ? Pour éviter encore le drame du Wakashio ou on peut avoir des renseignements dessus concernant ce gros montant de R 29 millions concernant aussi de *Long-Range Tracking Services* ?

Mr Maudhoo: I just answered, Mr Chairperson. I just gave the answer to someone who asked this. This project is for the global maritime distress safety system. So, any ship which is in distress, this is a system that has been put for maritime communications services and this amount is paid to the service provider, Mauritius Telecom, Rs28.9 m. per year. This is what hon. Boolell just said to table.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Maudhoo: We were not in distress. It just came that one.

Mr Nagalingum: Page 405, Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, can we know from the Minister who has been awarded the contract?

Mr Maudhoo: Alors 22070, it is provision for the payment of cleaning Services to one contractor, Neo Clean Ltd. So, this is for which place? Neo Clean Ltd for cleaning

services. Il y a aussi, je vois *sanitary* bins. Hygiene Team Services, another contractor. There are only two contractors that I can see, Neo Clean Ltd and Hygiene Team Services Company Ltd.

The Chairperson: Okay next Sub-Head 19-103 which starts at the bottom of page 408 and ends at page 412. Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 408, Item 21110.005 - *Personal Emoluments - Extra Assistance* for Rs4.5 m., can we know from the hon. Minister, what is this amount for?

Mr Maudhoo: Page 408, Extra Assistance, that is provision reduced with a view of spending trend; that is okay. This is for trainers and officers on contract, two trainers on contract, lecturer, I think this is for the MMTA, Mauritius Maritime Training Academy. For additional lecturers, for the Head Engineering Department, they are all on Deck Department and marine training officers. Normally, as and when courses are given, we take these services on contract. So, this is for the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 408, I take it under Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy is supposed to provide training to fishers and skippers but actually no training is being provided because equipment is not operational. Can we know from the Minister when are these equipment expected to be repaired? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, it is not because of equipment that courses are not being provided at the MMTA. Normally, the FITEC is for fishermen courses but because of COVID situation, the course has been disrupted. In fact, we have just launched new courses which are in demand in the shipping sector, It is not only the basic seamen's course, it is more different courses which most of the shipping companies are asking for – in fact, we have a lot of demand for certain particular jobs which are trying to give these courses.

An hon. Member: Maybe we can have a list.

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, we have just advertised that there will be new courses that we are providing which were in the papers right now, Rating forming part of navigational watch. Actually, at the MMTA, the particulars are for different courses. FITEC is for fishermen but

MMTA is for rating forming part of the engineering watch, skippers' courses also will restart again and chief engineer course and second engineer course will start.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 408, again under the Sub-Head of Mauritius Maritime Training Academy, as per the KPI in this Budget Estimates, there are 182 seafarers who were benefiting from training and it is being earmarked that 1000 seafarers will be benefiting for the budgeted year. May we know why there has been a reduction in the Budget though for the Manutius Maritime Training Academy? How will you cater for this increase that you are expecting with regards to the number of seafarers who will benefit from more training? It will be at page 404. You would see the number of trainees is 182, you are expecting 1000. But the Budget is being decreased. So, how will you cater for that?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, right now, so many of our seafarers, mostly working in the cruise, are stranded right now because of the COVID-19. Everybody knows about it. Because that was the main course that all the Mauritian were looking for, to go in cruise. So, now we are not concentrating on that particular course where there are lots of enrolments. We are going for different courses and this is the reason why we have less budget for that. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 409, Item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment*, can we have more details on this?

Mr Maudhoo: This is provision for the procurement and installation, testing and commissioning of life boat davits. It is a steel structure to hold the life boats. In fact, those two life boats, we had one life boat at Sea Tech and it is of no use now. We have got two life boats donation from the owners of M.V Wakashio. Maybe this will remain as a remembrance. That is for training at the MMTA. So, we have got those two life boat davits.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over!

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping (Rs256,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.54 p.m.)

Vote 19-2 Fisheries was called.

The Chairperson: We move to Sub-Head *19-201* which starts on page 413 to page 416.

Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: I have one question which falls under the Sub-Heading. Can we know for the last financial year the number of off-lagoon fishing licenses that have been delivered and the name of the owners of the company?

Mr Maudhoo: Off-lagoon fishing licenses mean artisanal fisheries.

(Interruptions)

Is it for the last year or last three years? I remember only 26. We gave 26 fishermen cards since I am Minister.

Mr Ramful: Off-lagoon?

Mr Maudhoo: No, they are off-lagoon. In fact, no more lagoon fishermen, we do not give any fishermen license in lagoon. It is all off-lagoon now.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Page 415, under Item *31121.803 – Acquisition of Patrol Vessels*, can we have an idea about how many vessels we are talking here? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, provision for acquisition of about 7 patrol boats, 7 outboard motors and 7 trailers for the Fisheries Protection Service. Obviously, it is to ensure that all fisheries are equipped with at least one patrol vessel to enhance surveillance of our lagoons, both inside and outside.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 414, Item *26313.018 – Fishermen Welfare Fund*, may we know the composition of the fund and details of expenses and on page 415, under Item *31112.410 – Upgrading of Fisheries Posts*, may we have a list of Fisheries posts that have already been upgraded, please?

Mr Maudhoo: For the composition of the Fishermen Welfare Fund, the Chairman is Mr Beemadoo and, of course, the representative of different Ministries and fishermen cooperatives and also representative of fishermen, organisation of fishermen. So, this I can table.

(Interruptions)

The Chairman! No, it is not that big fees, the Chairman gets only Rs14,960 and the members get Rs815. Regarding the Fish Landing Station, the hon. Member asked for renovation or Fisheries posts?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: The list. I asked about the list of Fisheries posts that have already been upgraded.

The Chairperson: If you do not have the list, you can circulate it later on.

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, upgrading works have been done at La Preneuse, Pointe aux Sables and Baie du Cap.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 414, under Item 26210.095 – *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)*, may we know who represents Mauritius on this Commission, how many times he has been attending the meetings of the Commission and if there are any reports that have been prepared, if same could be tabled?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, in fact, the Officer in Charge of my Ministry, the SCE and the Director of Fisheries who attend the Commission and also, I understand, that the Ambassador, Mr Koonjul also. In fact, we just had the meeting and we have read in the Press. But anyway, I will table whatever resolution has been taken.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 414, Item 22120.024 (b) – *Sea Cucumber Project (Funded by Australia)*, can we have more details on this project?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this Sea Cucumber Project is an Australian Funded Project but, unfortunately, Professor Southgate who is in this project is locked in Australia. So, equipment is already here at the AFRC. We are just waiting for the borders to open, that he comes to start the project. It has been delayed because of COVID-19.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Before coming to the item that I want to raise, I just wanted to add to that Sea Cucumber Project, whether the beneficiaries for the Capacity Building Programme have been identified? If yes, whether the Minister can table the answer?

Now, coming to the item that I want to raise, 22900. 999 – *Sea Grass Restoration and Conservation Programme*, can we have more details about this programme, please?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this project is ongoing actually. The AFRC is carrying out a Seagrass Project that includes mapping of seagrass. Obviously, analysis of carbon sequestration content in sediments and the restoration of degraded seagrass areas around the island. Groundwork is already being carried out at different sites around the island for the mapping of seagrass.

The Chairperson: Hon. Richard Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31112.032 (a) – *Construction of Marine Park at Blue Bay*, the project value is estimated at Rs34.5 m. and only Rs1.4 m. is allocated to the estimate 2021-2022. Can the Minister inform the House regarding the above project and the reason?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, this project is already there. The construction of Blue Bay Marine Park, the project was awarded in January 2015. The final handing over was done in April 2016. This Rs1.4 m. in fact is the new path way to visitors at Blue Bay, it has just been awarded on 27 May and work is supposed to start on 11 June 2021 and expected to be completed mid-October 2021. It is for a pathway only.

The Chairperson: Hon. Wochit!

Mr Wochit: On page 414, item 28212.016 - *Transfers to Households - Compensation to Heirs of Fishermen icw Accidental Death at Sea*, can the hon. Minister inform the House for Captain Bheenick on the Sir Gaëtan Tug, if it has been compensated to the family?

Mr Maudhoo: No, Mr Chairperson, it is not under my Ministry. Captain Bheenick, for me this is for fishers only.

Mr Wochit: We have Accidental Death at Sea, we have a case.

Mr Maudhoo: No, under my Ministry is for fishers only. I think that particular thing is under MPA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 415, item 31122.999 - *Other Machinery & Equipment - Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment of which (b)*

Installation of navigational aids, an amount of Rs5.6 m. has been earmarked, will the hon. Minister provide details of how many sites this measure will be concerned?

Mr Maudhoo: As announced by the hon. Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, this is the provision for installation of navigational aids for boat passengers at 22 sites to ease navigation of boats.

We have a list of 22 sites being surveyed by the Mauritius Hydrographic Services of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning. Actually for part 22, it will continue all around the island and if you want I can just give you some places, most of them are in the West and the North. It is in –

- (a) Baie du Tombeau, Pointe aux Sables;
- (b) Flic en Flac, Albion;
- (c) La Preneuse;
- (d) Rivière Noire;
- (e) Mont Choisy;
- (f) Trou aux Biches;
- (g) Grand Baie;
- (h) Pereybère, and
- (i) Cap Malheureux.

The 22 sites are in these regions.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 415, item 28225.008 - *Transfer to Private Enterprises - Off Lagoon Fishing Scheme of which Purchase of Semi-Industrial Fishing Boat*, can the hon. Minister table the list of beneficiaries?

Mr Maudhoo: Okay, Mr Chairperson, I will table. No worry.

The Chairperson: We move to the next sub-heading 19-202. It starts from page 416 to 418. No questions on this sub-heading? So, if there is no question, I have got a question!

D20/TAKE041MB/3

(4.07 p.m.)

Vote 20-1: Gender Equality and Family Welfare was called.

The Chairperson: We will start by sub-heading 20-101 which starts on page 423 and ends on page 424.

Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. On page 424, item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, can we know from the hon. Minister if there is any amount earmarked for training of the staff of her Ministry?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Sorry, on page 424 you said, hon. Member? Item 21111, which decimal?

Ms J. Bérenger: It is Staff Welfare. No particular decimal, but I just wanted to know if there is any amount earmarked for the training of the staff of the Ministry?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The training is undertaken it depends on what particular field you are speaking about, whether it is training in family welfare or...

Ms J. Bérenger: Other Staff Costs - is there any amount that is earmarked for the training of the staff of the Ministry because there is an increase in the allocated budget.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Again, I wish to make it clear, Mr Chairperson, that training, it depends on what training you are talking about. Are you talking about? The section that you are referring to is meant for emoluments, so when we speak about training...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman, let the hon. Minister reply please!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is a different item. This is for emoluments. Training costs will fall under a different item because we have different sections in the Ministry whether it is for the child section, the family section, the HR section if you see what I mean.

Is that okay for you, hon. Member?

Ms J. Bérenger: *Si la ministre pourrait m'éclairer en disant sous quel item sont les formations, ce serait bien. Merci.*

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is itemised. It is item wise, Mr Chairperson, if I may...

The Chairperson: Okay, we move to next question. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I have a question at page 419, please. Item II – Current Situation & Challenges.

The Chairperson: Which page is it?

Ms Anquetil: Yes, I may ask for a clarification. I can! Yes!

Page 419, Item II – Current Situation & Challenges. It is indicated that –

“The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (MGEFW) provides continuous technical support to other Ministries for more gender responsive policies.”

May we have the details of the continuous technical support? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, hon. Member if you could give me one second to retrieve the information you requested. I do not have this in my notes at the moment hon. Member.

Mr Chairperson, I will be very happy to table it at some later point.

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, we are on page 423. If you have any specific question concerning the previous pages, just come with a PQ later on.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 423, item 21110.005 - *Personal Emoluments - Extra Assistance*, can we know from the hon. Minister this item of Rs3.5 m., an increase of Rs500,000, who are the Advisers on the list-Extra Assistance?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I would like to inform the hon. Member and the House that there are presently 3 Advisers at the level of my Ministry. Would you like me to submit the names as well or would you want me to just cite them?

Mr Uteem: Yes, please tell us.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: There is –

- (a) an Adviser on Information Matters who was recruited in 2018, and her contract is renewed on a yearly basis. Her good name is Annabelle Volbert and her monthly salary is Rs59,700 according to PRB, obviously.
- (b) The second Adviser I am speaking about is the Adviser in Project Management. He was recruited in 2018 again, and his good name is Mr Narain

Sakurdeep. His present monthly salary is Rs66,650, again according to what is stipulated in the PRB.

- (c) The third Adviser is on Legal Matters. He was recruited in 2020. His good name is Mr Bhupen Ramsewak. His contract is renewed on a yearly basis and his present salary is Rs42,325, again according to the provisions in the PRB.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 424, item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*. May we know from the hon. Minister, the purpose of these surveys which were not allocated in the previous Budget but this time it is?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, if I can just repeat and confirm that we are talking about item 22130. Yes, the provision has been made for the conduct of an Impact Assessment Study of Current Programmes that are currently being implemented at the level of the Ministry. The House would wish to know that it is a recommendation that emanates from the National Strategy and Action Plan of the High-Level Committee on the Elimination of Gender-based Violence 2020-2024.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: I have a question on page 425.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Are we there yet?

The Chairperson: Later! Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 424, under item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*, can the hon. Minister explain why there has been a decrease in the provision of Publications and Stationery?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: There has been a decrease indeed, Mr Chairperson, in the provision for the publications and stationery section because we are opting more and more for digital medium; for our publications, there has just been a general reduction in the stationery, which is, I think, a good thing.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 424, item 31132.401 – *E-Government Projects (Digitisation)*, can the hon. Minister indicate why there is an increase in the budgeted amount for e-government projects?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The increase in the budgeted amount for the e-government projects: provision is made for the maintenance agreement for the Ministry's Fleet Management System, what we call the GPS (Global Positioning System) for all the 22 vehicles of the Ministry. The contractor is NAVEO Ltd. The increase is due to upward revision of the contract price from what it was last year, to Rs695,422.51.

The Chairperson: It seems that the hon. Member is happy with what you replied earlier. So, we stop here. Okay? We move to Sub-Head 20-102: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming, which starts on page 424 and ends on page 425. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you. Mr Chairperson. On page 425, item 26313.067 – *Extra-Budgetary Units*, it is with regard to the National Women Entrepreneur Council and National Women's Council. Both Councils, their budgeted sum have been decreased, can we know why?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Hon. Member, I was just flipping through my page. Can you just remind me of the item number, please?

Mr Lobine: Yes, the item number is 26313.067 – *Extra-Budgetary Units*, with regard to the National Women Entrepreneur Council and National Women's Council, both Councils, their budgeted sum have been reduced, can you provide us with details, please?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: If you just give me one second and I will just try and find out why there has been a reduction.

The Chairperson: Can we take another question in the meanwhile?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I have the data for the National Women's Council. The trend of expenditure has decreased due to COVID. As you may appreciate, the bulk of the mandate of the National Women's Council is delivered through events organised and gatherings, so, because of two lockdowns in two consecutive years, the trend has decreased in expenditure. It is pretty much the same for National Women Entrepreneur Council as well, hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.955 – *Gender Mainstreaming*. The sum earmarked for gender mainstreaming is more significant than for the other Ministries. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of how this sum is being used?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, the funds are going to be used, Mr Chairperson, for the implementation of projects which I am addressing, the existing, the prevailing and the ones identified in future; the prevailing gender gaps within some specific sectors in line Ministries and technical support and financial donors will be sought to collaborate with the Ministry for the execution of same.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 425, item 26313.066 – *National Women Entrepreneur Council*, can the Minister tell us how she intends to implement effective measures, *sachant que le budget a connu une baisse et que le Council n'a toujours pas de président et de secrétaire?* Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson...

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, again, it seems that it is a policy matter. I will request you again to come with a Parliamentary question, unless the Minister wants to reply.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: She can't reply?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I can indulge the hon. Member; I am always indulging her. So, the National Women Entrepreneur Council...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The Minister wants to reply and you are murmuring. Carry on, hon. Minister!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The National Women Entrepreneur Council, as you might be aware, was reconstituted in October 2020, however, due to some demands of that Chairperson that could not be met, we are now looking for the right person to be able to execute and implement all the visions that I have - we have - and this Government have for our women entrepreneurs.

As regard to the decrease in the sum allocated, rest assured, everything will be implemented as it should be. And, if the hon. Member wants further clarifications, I will happily oblige a PQ from her.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 425, *item 31112.418 – Upgrading of Women Centres*. I have noticed a substantial increase from Rs2.5 m. to Rs6.4 m. Can the Minister indicate how these funds will be used?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson and my hon. colleague, provision has been made for the following projects, I will quickly list them –

- (1) the construction of an external staircase at Abercrombie Women Empowerment Centre at the cost of Rs1.8 m.;
- (2) the renovation works at the National Women Development Centre of Phoenix at the cost of Rs2.2 m.;
- (3) the renovation works at Plaine des Papayes, Home Economics Resource Centre at the cost of Rs1 m.;
- (4) renovation works at Lallmatie Women Empowerment Centre at the cost of half a million, and
- (5) all the works that I have cited are going to be undertaken by the District Contractor.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, just one second. There were a couple of more Empowerment Centres being upgraded, but I will table them.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On page 425, may I refer the Minister to item 22900.903 - *Awareness Campaign of which Sensitisation on Gender Equality (UNDP Funded)*. You know the sum to me appears to be altering. Our legislation provides that there should be no discrimination irrespective of sexual orientation. Can I ask the hon. Minister as to the number of meetings held to sensitise people at large on the relevance and importance of gender equality?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I was looking for the item; I completely missed part of your question, hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Excuse me, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, you are okay? You are alright? I suspend the session for a few minutes.

At 4.25 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.28 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated. Hon. Minister, you were replying, you can continue.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Where were we? Awareness campaign, yes I had missed out entirely on hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell's question, if he could just remind me what the question was, please?

Dr. Boolell: The number of meetings held to sensitise people at large on the relevance and importance of gender equality?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: But, Mr Chairperson, we do have an allocation, the provision is in the budget to, in fact, carry out the sensitisation campaign and we are moving in that direction. We have awarded a contract to a particular firm to do the job, it's ongoing.

Dr. Boolell: The number of times you have reached out to people, number of meetings held all over the country, if you can circulate or table?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Sure, I can circulate them.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 424, item 22090 – *Security*, there has been an increase from Rs6 m. to Rs8.6 m., can we know why and what is the name of the service provider?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, in fact this has been a constant with all other Ministries because of the number of working hours according to the workers' rights and the new minimum salary. The provision for the payment of security services at those Women Empowerment Centres, the name of the contractor, Mr Chairperson, is Special Security Guards Ltd and I can table all the relevant details.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, you are okay now?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Thank you everyone. Page 425, item 31112.418 - *Upgrading of Women Centres*, the Minister just gave the list of women centres that have or will be upgraded. Mr Chairperson, the Richelieu Women Centre has not been operational since some years in spite of the fact that there is a real demand from the part of women in that region. Will the hon. Minister inform us why this Centre is not on the list of centres that will be upgraded?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, my hon. colleague will be very happy to note that it is one of the one that I had missed aside and it is in the list and the renovation works at Richelieu Women Empowerment Centre at the cost of Rs300,000. The Health and Safety Report recommended for electrical works, the scope of work has already been submitted by the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development and works will be undertaken by the District Contractor.

The Chairperson: A last question, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 425, on item 28211.051 - *Women's Associations*, being given that at the Regional Committees, there is an aging of the members, can the Minister state what is being done to encourage young women to register with the council and does she find it appropriate to give a grant of R 2,000 per association? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, again I think this is more pertaining to a Parliamentary Question which I will be very happy to reply.

The Chairperson: I do concur with you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, again, I think this is more pertaining to a Parliamentary Question which I will be very happy to elaborate upon.

The Chairperson: I do conquer with you.

(Interruptions)

We go to the next *Sub-Head 20-103*, which starts on page 425 and ends at page 426. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 426, Item 27210.011 - *Foster Care*, the sum earmarked has almost doubled from Rs7 m. to Rs12 m. Can the hon. Minister tell us why and can she also tell us the number of children currently in foster care?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, indeed, for the next financial year, my Ministry is envisaging to, first of all, review the foster care regulation which will enable the scaling up of the foster care programme and obviously this will allow for children of all ages ranging from babies to teenagers with the varying degrees of condition to be reinserted in a family setting. The budget, as you can see, is catering for an increase in the monthly Foster Care Allowance from Rs5,250 to Rs8,000 and at the moment the total number of foster homes as at June this year is 70, number of foster children as at June this year is 83.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 426, Item 22900.912 - *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*, can the hon. Minister provide more details about the increase in the allocation of funds for the running expenses for the shelters? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the provision for the running of shelters under the Management Services Contract in more details –

- (i) The shelter *La Cigogne* which is managed by the Children's Foundation, the annual contract amount is Rs4,441,000.
- (ii) The shelter *La Marguerite* which is managed by Children's Foundation, an annual contract of Rs11,350,000
- (iii) The shelter *L'Oasis* which is managed by an association called Population and Development, an annual contract of around Rs12 m., and there is also the shelter *La Colombe* which is managed by the Nation Children Council.

And the increase is due to the management of two shelters; that of Cap Malheureux, *L'Oiseau du Paradis* and that of *Notre Dame* which is managed by the National Children Council.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Can the Minister state the number of shelters operating as of date...

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Which item number are we discussing?

Ms Anquetil: Sorry, Item 22900.912 - *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I have just given the answer, I can table them.

Ms Anquetil: Can the Minister state the number of shelters operating as of date with licenses and those without licenses? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I am sorry to say that the hon. Member is trying to get me to answer PQs that I have already tabled. These are PQs that you yourself have brought to the House!

Ms Anquetil: But do you have an answer?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I do have the answers; you can refer to the Hansard.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We move to...

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I would invite you to stick to what has been budgeted, on the items that are here. If you wish to have the answers, I have already tabled them, you can consult the Hansard.

The Chairperson: I think you have given the reply, hon. Minister, let us go to another question. Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci.! *Sub-Head 20-103: Child Protection, Welfare and Development*, un peu plus tôt, la ministre m'a demandé de me référer aux *Items* pour poser les questions. Il n'y a aucun item pour la formation du personnel pour pouvoir travailler avec les enfants. Donc, je demande dans le budget qu'on nous demande de voter de R165,800,000, est-ce qu'il y a une somme allouée à la formation du personnel de son ministère ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I did answer this before. This falls under a different item altogether 22120.007, on page 426. It says fees for training and provision is made for training of CDU Officers and all key stakeholders including those in the High-Powered - Working Together Committee on the Children's Act 2020. Hon. Member, I would refer you to page 426, I will repeat it, it is item 22120.007.

(Interruptions)

You do not have the decimal, okay, but there you go, there has been provision to the tune of ...

(Interruptions)

There is also...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Member, there are also provisions ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, there are also dedicated training courses at the level of the Civil Service College where the officers go and obtain specific training.

The Chairperson: If the hon. Member has not understood, I understand it, it is okay. We move on to hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Mayotte: Excuse me, Mr Chairperson, my question is on next page, page 427.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Item 31132.401 - *Intangible Fixed Assets E-Government Projects (Digitisation)*, can the hon. Minister explain the increase in the E-Government Projects (Digitisation)?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the increase is due to the extension of the Child Protection Register for additional child protection services outstations as well and the works are related to the register projects such as the revisiting of the interface of the existing register to make it a bit more user-friendly, to facilitate the input of cases, software management agreement for the child protection register with SIR, I will table the rest of the information for the House.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Wochit!

Mr Wochit: Page 426, Item number 31111.407 - *Upgrading of Shelters for Children*, can the hon. Minister inform the House why the amount has been decreased so much from Rs17 m. to Rs2 m.?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the reason for the decrease is because a good chunk of the renovation work has already been completed, for example the one for *La Cigogne* at the tune of Rs1 m. has been completed, upgrading of shelter *La Colombe* has been completed, the *Notre Dame* Relay Shelter at the tune of Rs5 m. works are to be completed by the end of this month.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under page 426, Item 26313.050 - *National Adoption Council*, the reduction in the budgeted amount. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of adoption applications handled by the National Adoption Council in the year that just went by?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The number of cases is one case.

The Chairperson: Okay.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Did the hon. Member wish me to elaborate on why it has been decreased?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: So, we move to next Sub-Head, *Sub-Head 20-104* which starts on page 426 up to page 429. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: In relation to item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (b) Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence*, can we have statistics with regard to the number of victims to whom assistance were provided in the last Financial Year?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The number of victims for the period of July last year to May this year is 376 women and 158 children.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (c) Gender-Based Violence Observatory*, the setting up of this Observatory was already in the last budget speech, can we know where matters stand?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Indeed, Mr Chairperson, with the support of the UNDP there has been a consultative workshop conducted in December 2019 with stakeholders on gender-based violence, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues. And my Ministry has approached the MRIC for technical assistance to set up the Observatory. During the Financial Year last year, funds have also been provided to the MRIC and a Memorandum of Understanding is immediately going to be signed to give effect to this collaboration and the work is ongoing.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, under item 22120.012 – *Fees Retainer fees to Counsel*, I know that there has been a reduction in the budgeted sum from Rs1.7 m. to Rs1.2 m., may we know why and can we be communicated with the list of those Counsels whose services have been retained?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the decrease in fees is due to the resignation of two legal resource persons. I will be very happy to table the names and other details to the House.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme*, there has been an

increase from Rs12.1 million to Rs14.1 million. Can the hon. Minister elaborate how funds allocated under this item will be used?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there are various aspects to this and it is a very lengthy reply; I will just happily table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (i) Customer Relationship Hub*, we had Rs2 m. for the last budget but nothing has been earmarked for this year, or afterwards. Will the hon. Minister give us details about it?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, in fact, this programme has been revamped, hon. Member and Mr Chairperson. As you know, we have the National Strategy Plan, the Action Plan, to eliminate gender-based violence following the High-Level Committee. So, this Customer Relationship Hub Programme has been revamped through the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan because there was going to be duplication.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (j) Mobile Application LESPWAR*, can we know from the hon. Minister since the launch of this application, how many persons have used this application to give alert to the police?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The House would wish to note that the number of registrations on the application from November 2020 to 15 June this year is 1,730. Number of times that the panic alert button was hit was 637 and the number of call-free was 58.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (d) Empowerment of Victims of Domestic Violence; (h) Implementation of Action Plan on Intimate Partner Violence*, can the hon. Minister give us more details about the programme in Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme on Empowerment of Victims of Domestic Violence and also on Implementation of Action Plan on Intimate Partner Violence, please?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: For the Intimate Partner Violence, Mr Chairperson, Action Plan 2020-2022, provision is made to address that phenomenon on the scourge as a step in the

fight to protect the survivors of intimate partner violence and this Action Plan is going to be a roadmap to fight intimate partner violence for the next 3 years. Sorry, I forgot the other part of the question, *malheureusement*.

Mrs Mayotte: Sub-section – (h) *Implementation of Action Plan on Intimate Partner Violence*.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I have just answered that bit; it was an earlier one. I have just answered that bit. In fact, regarding the IPV, the Intimate Partner Violence, the roadmap, we had to renew, seeking the views of stakeholders last year in October and in the meantime again, the National Strategy and Action Plan to combat gender-based violence came forward, it was launched in November 2020 and as the recommended actions of that Action Plan and the ones for combating IPV - Intimate Partner Violence are replicated and in a view to avoid that duplication of work, it will be implemented through that National Strategy.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil! But please bear in mind we are in a Committee of Supply not in a Question Time.

Ms Anquetil: Page 427, item 22130.001 – *Studies and Surveys - Studies - Prevalence of GBV in Mauritius (UNDP Funded)*, Gender-Based Violence, can the hon. Minister tell us when was the first study carried out, the outcome thereof, and would the hon. Minister lay a copy of the study on the table of the National Assembly? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: A kick-off meeting to this effect was held on 09 June this year and the funds are being provided by the UNDP and the services of the Consultant to conduct the above study will be retained by those fact funding.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Permettez-moi d'abord de simplement demander à la ministre de bien vouloir déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée les informations qu'elle avait donné un peu plus tôt sur les formations *for sake of clarity, please*. Et ma requête par rapport à la page 427, item 22900.908 – *Other Goods and Services of which Women & Children's Solidarity Programme (f) Integrated Support Centre*, est-ce qu'on peut savoir combien de personnes sont affectées à ce centre ? Et est-ce que toutes les tablettes sont désormais fonctionnelles ? Parce qu'il me semble que des tablettes sont données aux personnels pour pouvoir répondre aux appels. Est-ce que les tablettes sont fonctionnelles et combien de personnes travaillent dans ce centre ? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: As regards the number of personnel, I will have to check and table. But I can tell the House that the total number of calls received at the ISC, the Integrated Support Centre, on our hotline, since July 2019 to May 2021 is 10,866 and the funds are going to be used for the purchase of IT equipment and for all operation costs.

Ms J. Bérenger: Les informations sur la formation peuvent aussi être déposées sur la table?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I shall table.

The Chairperson: Last question! Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: In relation to Item 22900.908 - *Women & Children's Solidarity Programme (e) Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS)*, can we know, for the last financial year, how many cases have been reported on this system?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is a total of 2,425 cases.

The Chairperson: Thank you. No further questions?

Vote 20-1 - Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Rs450,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.07 p.m.)

Vote 20-2 - Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 430, I refer the hon. Minister to Item 26313.085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*. Since the funding comes wholly from Government and is no longer as a result of cess on sugar proceeds, can I ask the Minister as to whether the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund has recruited new staff lately and, second, whether the activities are the same or have been widened to cater for the community at large? Because there was a time when it catered specifically for the welfare of the employees in the sugarcane industry.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the funding is provided obviously for the operating costs of SILWF. The scope and the variation in activities are always reviewed so that they can meet the demands of our community at the moment and, as you may be aware, there has also been an announcement of a special envelope allocated to this particular

parastatal to be able to implement what we call community and family wellness project, which is going to encompass a lot more variation in activities, not just for the sugar industry.

Dr. Boolell: Circulate it, please.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I shall.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 431, Item 31112.439 - *Upgrading of Social Welfare Centres*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if the upgrading of the Social Welfare Centres does include Robinson and Dubreuil Social Welfare Centre.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Unfortunately, it is not in my list at the moment, but I can give you the ones that are in my list. But Dubreuil does not figure in the list and it will be considered.

Mr Dhunoo: Robinson and Dubreuil, hon. Minister.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: No, it is not on my list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil?

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 431, Item 31112.023 - *Community Centres/Social Halls*. Can the hon. Minister state the amount of money earmarked for Sadally Community Centre, and can she table the list of activities carried out during the last financial year, please? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Just give me one second to retrieve the information that my hon. colleague has requested. Mr Chairperson, the renovation and upgrading works at these centres will be carried out on a priority basis. So, if that centre that the hon. Member is citing is considered to be a priority, it will be looked at.

Ms Anquetil: I asked for the amount of money earmarked for Sadally Community Centre.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The money is not earmarked for one specific community centre, hon. Member. The work is carried out according to a list of priorities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 431, under Item, 31112.439 - *Upgrading of Social Welfare Centres*, may I know from the hon. Minister if the Camp Fouquereaux Social Welfare is on her list?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Again, the list will be compiled, hon. Kushal Lobine, and I will circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 430, Item 28211.022 - *Social Welfare Centres*. May I have a breakdown from the hon. Minister of the funds allocated to each Social Welfare Centre? She can deposit it.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I will be very happy to table the breakdown for you. I do not have it right now.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 430, under Item 26313.085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, there is an increase for this financial year. Can we know the nature of this increase?

The Chairperson: Can we take another question meanwhile? So, we move on to the next question?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Sure, yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Under the same Item 26313.085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, can the hon. Minister circulate the names of the Chairman and members of the Committee as well as the sub-committees? I know it is a long list, but can it be circulated later on?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Absolutely, very happily.

Mr Ramful: We want to be acquainted to them as well.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I will be very happy to get you to get acquainted with all of them.

The Chairperson: Last question! Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Mr Chairperson, page 431, Item 31112.439 - *Upgrading of Social Welfare Centres*. Can the hon. Minister explain how funds for upgrading of Social Welfare Centres will be used in the Financial Year 2020-2021?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: 2020-2021 was last year.

Mrs Mayotte: Excuse me, 'have been used'.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: They have been used for waterproofing works at different Centres: Quartier Militaire, Rivière du Rempart, Bambous, l'Aventure, Triolet, Petit Raffray Social Welfare Centres.

The Chairperson: The time is over!

Vote 20-2 Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities (Rs362,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I will suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 5.03 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.47 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

(5.48 p.m.)

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage was called.

The Chairperson: So, we start by Subheading 21-101 which starts at page 436 and ends at page 437. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 436, Item 21110.005 – *Personal Emoluments – Extra Assistance*, may I know from the hon. Minister what this item relates to and why has there been an increase of Rs1 m.?

Mr Teeluck: Mr Chairperson, provision is being made for payment of salaries of advisers. Increase in provision is due to salary being paid to 3 advisers instead of 2. Presently it is 2. The names?

Mr Uteem: Yes. The names of the advisers, please.

Mr Teeluck: Yes. So, currently, as I said, there are 2 advisers. Adviser on Information Matters, Miss H. Lakhpatwala and Adviser on Public Relations Matters, Mr A. Doorgachand.

The Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. On the same item, can we know their remunerations and their qualifications?

Mr Teeluck: Remuneration as per PRB, so, for Adviser on Information Matters, she draws a salary of Rs59,700, of course plus travelling allowance. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and Mass Communication plus a Certificate in Media Law. As regards Adviser on Public Relation Matters, he draws a salary of Rs21,475, plus mileage allowance. He holds a MSc, Cardinal UK Fleet Training Academy and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and another Certificate on Health issues again.

The Chairperson: I do not see any hand raised. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I have a question on the last Item, page 437, Item 22900.955 - *Other Goods and Services of which Gender Mainstreaming*, we have been seeing this, I think, in the whole vote, *Gender Mainstreaming*, can you shed some light on this Item?

Mr Teeluck: Gender mainstreaming, just kindly bear with me. Actually, it is a project under Ministry of Gender, each and every Ministry has a vote to work on specific program in relation to gender. Our proposed project was Drama Festival in Creole and in Bhojpuri on theme of gender gap and sensitisation on the theme of gender mainstreaming.

The Chairperson: No hand raised! So, we move to Subheading 21-102 which starts at page 437 and ends at page 439. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the Minister to page 438, on top of the page, Item 22120.008 - *Fees of which Fees to Consultants - Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment for Buffer Zone, Aapravasi Ghat*, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to where we are as regards to these two consultancies?

Mr Teeluck: Actually, it is a single exercise covering two different aspects, that is, Heritage Impact Assessment and Visual Impact Assessment. The contract started in February 2021 and the report is expected in July 2021. On Monday last we received the interim report and now we are waiting for the final report.

The Chairperson: It's okay? Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Mr Chairperson, at page 438, item 26313.036 - *Mauritius Film Development Corporation*, I can see a figure of Rs14,500,000 has been earmarked. Can we have particulars with regard to the Chairman and members of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation?

Mr Teeluck: The MFDC is chaired by Mr A. Martin and the General Manager is Mr S. Jootun. I may table the complete list of the Board.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 439, item 31112.420 - *Upgrading of Theatres*, can the hon. Minister provide more details about this item? Thank you.

Mr Teeluck: 420, upgrading of?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Theatres.

Mr Teeluck: So, for upgrading of theatres, actually provision is being made for the purchase of digital audio workstation, wired and wireless microphones and for last year, stage diffusion system and sound equipment were required. So, it's for further acquisition.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 438, item 28215.013 - *Assistance to Local Film Producers*, may we know the details of this assistance? What kind of assistance will be provided?

Mr Teeluck: So, assistance for Local Film Producers. Local Film Producers will be invited to submit project proposals together with their scripts for consideration. Thereafter, there will be a panel of selection. So, basically it is for local film productions and as I said, we will call for applications for proposals in relation to this vote.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to page 438, item 28212.014 - *Financial Assistance to Artists*. We have a series of items, starting from (a) to (e). May the Minister table it because it might be quite long, details about the expenses incurred, who are the beneficiaries?

Mr Teeluck: Of course.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Minister please provide more details on the welcome increase of provision for Mauritius Society of Authors, listed on page 438, item 26313.044- *Mauritius Society of Authors*. Thank you.

Mr Teeluck: So, Mr Chairperson, provision is being made to meet the recurrent expenditure for this financial year. The increase in provision is to cater for the payment of the basic salary of 21 staff following the drastic fall in revenue from royalties collected due to the

COVID-19 pandemic. Revenue collected for the last financial year were merely Rs9.5 m. out of which 30% is deducted for administrative cost which amounts to Rs3 m. So, this year, we had to increase the vote so as to cater for, as I said, basic salaries of 21 staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Page 438, item 26313.106 - *Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust*, can the Minister provide details with regard to this item and whether it has been operational?

Mr Teeluck: Well, the Board of Trust for the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust was constituted for the first time in 2001 for a period of 3 years. In February 2005, the Board was reconstituted for a period of 3 years, again with Mr Chan Lau as Chairperson and in July 2005, the Board was dissolved following the resignation of the Chairperson. Actions will be initiated for the reconstitution of the Trust.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 439, item 31112.038 - *Setting up of Galerie d'Arts Nationale* from Rs1 m. to Rs8 m., can the hon. Minister provide more details?

Mr Teeluck: Well, the increase is for the rehabilitation work to restore the Ex-Military Hospital enlisted building earmarked for the setting up of the gallery. Scope of work and specification have been finalised and tender will be launched after clearance from the National Heritage Fund.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 438, item 26313.116 – *Speaking Unions*, can the hon. Minister provide us details with regard to the different Speaking Unions that have been entitled for such grant and whether there is any further provision for the advent of an Arabic Speaking Union?

Mr Teeluck: The list of Speaking Unions?

The Chairperson: It is as a footnote.

Mr Teeluck: As a footnote.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Aumeer: I Apologise for that.

Mr Teeluck: And if I may just add, for the Arabic Speaking Union it is being constituted.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 438, item 26313.102 - *Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund*, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can table the list of the board members and also the mode of nomination? How was the board constituted, was it nominated by the Minister or otherwise?

Mr Teeluck: Well, the board is constituted as per the governing law of the Islamic Cultural Centre and as regards the list of board members, I will circulate same.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 438, Minister, I refer you to item 26313.072 - *President's Fund for Creative Writing*. Now, I am sure the Minister would agree that Rs150,000, though it is a sum which is being credited to the fund, is very small so as not to say paltry. Can the Minister see to it, that this amount be increased? The creative writing is important and I know the president's fund is being used for a good cause but it needs to be given the resources.

Mr Teeluck: Of course. Just to reassure the hon. Member, out of the Rs1.5 m., Rs1 m. is voted just as assistance to creative writers and, of course, we will take on board his recommendation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 438, item 22900.018 - *Hiring of Services for Events*, may we have a breakdown of whose services have been retained and for what event? He may table a list.

Mr Teeluck: I am sorry, it's 22900?

Mr Uteem: It's 22900.018 - Hiring of Services for Events.

Mr Teeluck: So, provision is being made to meet expenses to be incurred for payment of cachets to local and international artists for performing in different events organised by the Ministry, subsistence allowance to Mauritian artists when performing abroad and *per diem* to foreign artists for performing in Mauritius. If the hon. Member wish to have a list of beneficiaries, of course, I will table same.

The Chairperson: Hon. Wochit!

Mr Wochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 439, item 26323.036 - *Mauritius Film Development Corporation*, we have an increase for more than 10% and is it for the local artists or for the foreign, can we have some details?

Mr Teeluck: Actually the increase is for the acquisition of a 4k LED screen, acquisition of a 4k camera, one covered light-duty truck and setting up of an editing suites and other related equipment.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 438, item 28212.014 – *Transfer to Households - Financial Assistance to Artists - (e) Other support to Artists*, an amount of Rs3 m. was budgeted for 2020-2021. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this amount?

Mr Teeluck: Okay. If you may just give me one minute. Do you want me to go through it or I can table it, it's a long list. Just a couple of information, 29 artists have been provided financial assistance to the tune of Rs906,000. So, I will certainly table the complete list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Last question.

Mr Bodha: Yes, page 438, item 26313.009 – *Extra-Budgetary Units -Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand Trust Fund*, pour la conservatoire de François Mitterrand, il y a une baisse entre le R 17 million et R 12 million. Est-ce que je peux demander au ministre de nous expliquer pourquoi il y a une baisse cette année ? Merci

Mr Teeluck: The decrease in provision is due to the fact that the Conservatoire generates revenue from fees charge to students for courses. Some thousands students are enrolled for this academic year. The revenue received will be used to partly finance its operation cost. Project revenue is Rs3 m.

The Chairperson: Okay? So, we move to next sub-heading 21-103 which starts at the page 439, go through page 440 and ends at page 444.

Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 440, item 26323.039 –*Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Museums Council of which (b) Rehabilitation of SSR Memorial Centre for Culture, P. Louis*, I would to thank the hon. Minister for this item rehabilitation of SSR Memorial Centre for Culture. May I know how these Rs3 m. will be used for this rehabilitation?

Mr Teeluck: The repairs, I will just go through the repairs being proposed. The course of action repairs to the facades, wooden openings and anti-termite treatment will be given priority. The project will take 14 months to complete and the museum is expected to reopen to public in August 2022.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I would stick to the same item 26323.039 - *Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Museums Council of which (a) Renovation of National History Museum, Mahebourg (project preparation)*, can we have some details pertaining to this project, please?

Mr Teeluck: Provision has been made for the project preparation for renovation of the National History Museum of Mahebourg. The National History Museum has an important collection of paintings of well-known artists. So, some of these paintings are over a century old and are in a very poor condition and cannot be exhibited to the public at present. So, Rs5 m. will be used for consultancy services for the in-depth survey with a view to prepare scope of work, bill of quantities, drawing and cost of estimate for the renovation works.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, page 440, capital expenditure, item 26323.062 – *Extra-Budgetary Units - National Library*. As far as the recurrent expenditures is concerned, of course, it entails a huge expenditure but when it comes to capital expenditure, I know that there is, the hon. Minister is putting on his best endeavour to rehabilitate the National Library or to give it a new impetus and to do the rehabilitation works where the need is felt. Now, Rs1,500,000, is that an adequate amount that has been budgeted or more would be needed because National Library, I am sure it would entail a lot of money would be needed to be spent on it for proper rehabilitation. Can the hon. Minister apprise us as to what is being needed to ensure that there is proper rehabilitation of the National Library?

Mr Teeluck: Well, actually there is a project for the construction of a new State of Art National Library and National Archives Department. So, at this stage, no major work is being done in the current location, current site. We are working on having this new building where it will be a more appropriate environment to house the archives.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you, page 440, item 28221.013 – *Other Expenses - Classified Museums*, can the hon. Minister provide details about the items, namely the names of the eligible beneficiaries, the form and the conditions attached to the grant and how will the Ministry ensure that the grant will be distributed fairly to all classified museums, please?

Mr Teeluck: Okay. So, provision is being made for the restoration and preservation of five private museums, classified under the Mauritius Museum Council Act, namely –

1. *Touche du Bois*;
2. *Musée de la Petite Collection*;
3. Sir Jean Moilin Ah Chuen Memorial Centre;
4. Jewish Detainees Museum, and
5. *Musée De La Photographie*.

And to ensure that those classified museums can survive, a grant of up to Rs200,000 will be provided to each classified private museum on a case to case basis, of course, using the form of a grant mechanism to these classified museums to –

- (a) purchase appropriate equipment to control the environmental factors;
- (b) restore artefacts, and
- (c) to upgrade the way, the exhibits are displayed.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage (Rs525,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.10 p.m.)

Vote 22-1 Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms was called.

The Chairperson: So, again we move by the sub-headings. We start by 22-101. Its starts at the page 448 up to the top half of page 449. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 449, item 22030 – *Rent*, can I know from the hon. Minister, Rs26,150,000 budget for 2021-2022 with regard to rental of building. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any corrective measures have been taken as in the Audit Report 2020-2021, the building was underutilised where Rs112,000 cost per staff per year compare to half with other Ministries and can he table or give details of the contract?

Mr Hurdoyal: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Before I answer this question, with your permission, Mr Chairperson, let me seize this opportunity to wish all public officers a happy UN Public Service Day as we are celebrating this event worldwide today.

(Applause)

As regards to the question asked by the hon. Member, the rent is to meet the cost of rental of facilities for the activities to be undertaken by the Ministry such as workshop, seminars and audio-visual facilities.

As regards the Director of Audit which drew our attention concerning rent, yes, our Ministry has already taken the necessary action and we have already released one floor from the SICOM Tower.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, for this section, the time allocation agreed between both Whips is only five minutes per subsection. So, I will request to avoid having long questions, like hon. Juman just had.

Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 449, under Capital Expenditure, Item 31112.058 - *Construction of Civil Service College*, can we have a status on this?

Mr Hurdoyal: Provision is made to cater for the construction of the Civil Service College Mauritius at Le Réduit Triangle. Tenders were launched on 28 May 2021. The closing date is 12 July 2021, and construction works are expected to start in September 2021.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same item, I can see that a sum of Rs60 m. was earmarked for last year. Can we have details about how this Rs60 m. was spent?

Mr Hurdoyal: In fact, the sum of Rs6.2 m. out of the Rs60 m. was paid to the Consultant.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell, you have the floor.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 449, I refer the hon. Minister to Item 22030 – *Rent*. I see that there has been a slight decrease in the amount budgeted for Financial Year 2021-2022. Could the hon. Minister give us an explanation - if anything is a good thing?

Mr Hurdoyal: The decrease in provision is due to the release, as I said earlier, of level 12 of SICOM Building 2 in Port Louis. The Ministry is currently renting part of level 2, levels 3 to 12 and two commercial spaces of a total of 5,574.5 sq metres at SICOM Building 2 for a monthly rent of Rs2,338,522.97; 107 sq metres at NPF Building to operate the correspondence service at the cost Rs47,455 per month, and additional five parking slots at the Garden Tower due to limited space at SICOM Building 2.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. We now move to the next subsection, which is Vote 22-102, starting at page 449 and ending at page 450. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: In fact, for me, it's 103. I am sorry.

The Chairperson: I see a hand raised far away from me over there; hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to page 450, Capital Expenditure, Item 31 and Item 31132.111 - *E-Document Management System - Business Continuity Model*. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to this project?

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, the UNDP is financing three digitalisation projects for the Government, namely –

- 1) The Electronic Document Management System at my Ministry;
- 2) The Parliamentary e-DMS with electronic voting facilities for the National Assembly, and
- 3) Automation of the data capture process at the Registrar General's Department.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 450, Item 22900.993 - *Expenses i.c.w Sandbox Framework*. May I know from the hon. Minister what this Sandbox Framework is?

Mr Hurdoyal: Provision has been made for financing project under the Sandbox Framework for Ministries and Departments. As at date, seven projects are being examined at the level of my Ministry. Concerning the Sandbox Framework, as announced in last year's Budget, my Ministry introduced a Sandbox Framework in March this year, to facilitate the adoption of emerging and innovative technologies in Ministries and Departments to improve the quality of service delivery and response to the evolving needs and exigencies of demanding public.

So, the Sandbox Framework, which is based on international best practices, will provide public organisations with the flexibility to have recourse to the services of innovative companies and start-ups to develop application through proof of concept model on a pilot basis for eventual scaling up into a comprehensive solution.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Yes, thank you. On page 449, Item 22120 – *fees*, the allocated budget for the fees has nearly doubled. Can we know the reason?

Mr Hurdoyal: This is provision made for payment of fees to assessors, fees for training, and fees for consultants. The increase in provision is to cater for payment of software designers who will be recruited under the Expert Skills Scheme for the in-house development of the e-HR System.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Next Sub-Head 22-103: Capacity Building in the Civil Service. It starts at page 450 and ends at the same page. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 450, Item 22120.039 – *Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servant*. Out the Rs10 m. which was budgeted for 2020-2021, can we know how much has been spent, and can we also have a breakdown of the amount spent, please?

Mr Hurdoyal: An amount of Rs11.5 m. was provided in Financial Year 2020-2021 for training purposes. The total amount has been used up. A reallocation of Rs1.4 m. has been made to meet additional cost related to training. Out of the provision of Rs11.5 m., 4,272 public officers have been trained, and I can say the Civil Service College Mauritius has provided training to some 10,000 public officers during this financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to the same item 22120.039 - *Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servant*, can I know whether it is linked with the HRMIS? With regard to the HRMIS project, where Rs400 m. have been spent, can I know from the hon. Minister what is the status of the project and by when we can expect it to be fully operational?

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, we all know the HRMIS is a project dated since 2013 under the Labour Party/PMSD Government. This project, up till now, has incurred a big investment and we are still struggling to complete the whole project. The Government has spent Rs430 m. on HRMIS, and the Government has decided to wind up the HRMIS and have it replaced by e-HR, which deals mainly with HR core functionalities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 450, under item 22120.039 – *Fees of which Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servants*, again the same item, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how much of this amount of Rs10 m. was used to train civil servants on Work from Home project?

Mr Hurdoyal: Well, I already mentioned earlier that the amount already stated - I can tell you that we have done training under the Work from Home items. Courses have been done through the Civil Service College, Mauritius. But I can table the number of Public Officers who have attained this course.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Next sub-head 22104, starts at page 451 and ends at page 451 itself. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Mr Chairperson, on item number 22060 – *Maintenance*, I can see a huge sum of Rs45,125,000 was spent, can we have some details about this expenditure?

Mr Hurdoyal: Well, provision made for the maintenance of plant and equipment, IT Equipment and furniture. The present provision is based on the actual trend of expenditure, Mr Chairperson and I can have the details also, if you want, I can table it, there is a long list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Merci page 451, item 22900.035 - Other Goods and Services of which Public Service Day*, can the Minister give us more details about this item?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, it is the provision made to meet the cost for celebration of the UN Public Service Day. As I stated earlier, Mr Chairperson, today we are celebrating the UN

Public Service Day worldwide and I need to thank the Government and the Minister of Finance who made provision for Rs1 m. to celebrate this event for next financial year and we are thinking to honour all our retired Public Officers with this event.

Dr. Boolell: Where is the celebration going to take place?

Mr Hurdoyal: Excuse me?

Dr. Boolell: Where is it going to take place?

Mr Hurdoyal: No celebration.

The Chairperson: No hands raised, so we move to next sub-head 22105, it starts at page 451 and ends at page 454. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Mr Chairperson, page 452 under item number 22900.934 - *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*, there has been an increase in the budget, may we be provided with more details as to this enhancement of work environment, how is it being done?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, as the name itself states, Mr Chairperson, it is the work environment, it helps for the welfare and a conducive environment for the Public Officers to work and provision made to cater for projects funded by Ministry to improve the work environment in Ministries and Departments. Yes, the budget has increased because there are lots of demands and I will have to thank my Officers that we have been able to use all the funds that were allocated for this financial year and we have been allocated more funds so that we can cater for more requests and demands from different Ministries and Departments.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister.

Mr Hurdoyal: And one thing I would like to add also is that with the enhancement of work environment program, we are changing a bit our projects where we are coming up with green project across the Public Service where this will help Departments and Ministries, they can cater for green projects.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson! Under the same item, may we have a breakdown of expenses under this item?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, we can table the list. There are 178 projects to the tune of Rs4 m. under this program.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: It has been canvassed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Wochit!

Mr Wochit: Yes, on page 454, item 22-104 - *Human Resource Management in Civil Service*, we have noticed that they have got nearly 400 jobs which have been decreased. Can we have some information on this one?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the decrease in provision is mainly due to the fact that as from financial year 2021-2022, the salaries of all officers of the Human Resource Management Cadre will be met out by the vote of respective Ministries and Departments where they are posted as recommended by the Director of Audit, a total of 354 officers are concerned.

The Chairperson: No more hands raised? I know you are all tired.

Vote 22-1 – Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (Rs335,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Estimates 2021-2022 & Indicative Estimates 2020-2023 & 2023-2024 were considered and agreed to.

The Appropriation (2021-2022) Bill 2021 (No. X of 2021) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees reported accordingly.

The Deputy Chairperson of Committees: Hon. Members, I have to report to the House that the Estimates of Expenditure 2021-2022 & Indicative Estimates 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 and the Appropriation (2021-2022) Bill 2021 (No. X of 2021) have passed the Committee of Supply without amendment.

Hon. Members, the Committee of Supply is over. Mr Speaker will now take the Chair. I thank you.

Mr Speaker: Now, the good news.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 29 June 2021 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. Padayachy seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 6.32 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 29 June 2021 at 11.30 a.m.