

No. 27 of 2010



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
THURSDAY 09 DECEMBER 2010**

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

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Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

Members

Members

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MAURITIUS**Fifth National Assembly****FIRST SESSION****Debate No. 27 of 2010**

Sitting of Thursday 09 December 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 10.00 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Debate No. 27 of 09.12.10

CONTENTS**Papers Laid****Motion**

Suspension of S.O. 10(2)

Bills (Public)

The Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010)

The Clinical Trials Bill (No. XIX of 2010)

The Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XVIII of 2010)

Adjournment

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of The Clinical Trials Bill (No. XIX of 2010).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Collection of Statistics Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 212 of 2010).

C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

The Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix (street naming) Amendment Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 211 of 2010).

D. Minister of Information and Communication Technology –

The Electronic Transactions (Certification Authorities) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 213 of 2010).

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Deputy 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 Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the Clinical Trials Bill (No. XIX of 2010) was read a first time.

The Appropriation (2011) Bill

(No. XVII of 2010)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010) was resumed.

Ministry of Industry and Commerce – Programme Code 601 – Policy and Management for Industry and Commerce was called.

Mr Uteem: On page 393, under item 22: *Goods and Services*, there is a whole list of new expenses for rent, office expenses, etc. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is acquiring a new building or moving to a new location for the Ministry?

Mr Soodhun: It is a new item, provision for running of vehicles for the Minister and the Permanent Secretary.

Mr Uteem: I was talking about the office expenses, office equipment, and rent. I wanted to know whether there is a new building, a new location.

Mr Soodhun: It's a new item, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 387, *Programme 601: Policy and Management for Industry and Commerce Policy - Ensure efficient functioning of agencies and other units falling under the aegis of the Ministry*, what are measures taken by the Ministry to ensure the proper functioning of the State Trading Corporation and other agencies falling under the Ministry. Secondly, under *Formulate policies relating to supply of essential commodities, prices of controlled goods*, can the Minister inform us how many prices are controlled as at to date and, secondly, whether there are new policies which are being set out by the STC these days?

The Chairperson: Very briefly.

Mr Bhagwan: I am taking it, Sir, in terms of the Ministry on performance not on general policy.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, I have not initiated the new policy. We are working under the same policy. There is a long list of commodities which are under control and I will circulate it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I am on page 393, there are new items. Must we take it that it is a new building that is being rent for this financial year and if so, for which purpose the Ministry is having a new building?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, we had certain problems where we were because we had to make place for the Ministry of Tourism in the Air Mauritius Building so we rent another building to cater for the other offices.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on the same item at page 393 - *21 Compensation of Employees* – can I take the hon. Minister back to page 386 - *Overview of Ministry, Major Achievements for 2010, Accreditation of 15 laboratories against international standards ISO/IEC 17025:2005*, can the hon. Minister circulate the list of these laboratories? On the same page – *Licensing of scrap metal exporters, dealers, carriers and collectors has been introduced to prevent the incidence of theft*; may we know the name of the company? How many licences have been given and to which company?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, there is a long list that I am going to circulate.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 393, item 22010 - *Cost of Utilities*. We know that recently we've had an increase of electricity tariff of the order 10%, but I see that there is an increase of almost 100% with regard to cost of utilities. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to why we have this considerable increase?

Mr Soodhun: It was really underestimated; we have to address this situation in order to add for the provision for cellular phones, settlement of telephone bills, internet services and maintenance of telephones.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to page 387- *Ensure efficient functioning of agencies*, can the hon. Minister give us a list of those agencies because I think with reshuffling of the Ministry of Commerce and Business, we don't know which agency goes under what Ministry. Can he spell out all these agencies for us? With regard again to efficient functioning of agencies, is there any measure which the Ministry has taken with regard to the management of the STC in view of all the losses that have been made in the past and in view of the fact that there is a new manager that has been put on board? Have there been any new measures and how does it affect the Budget of the Ministry as a consequence of all the losses that had been made at the STC?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, the agency is STC/MSB and EM. Secondly, as I have mentioned, we have a new GM and an enquiry committee has been set up by the GM to enquire into the situation and to take the appropriate decision to remedy the situation if needed.

Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry and Commerce (Rs9,529,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 602: Industrial Development was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 394, under item 25110002 - *Subsidies - Enterprise Mauritius*, may I know from the hon. Minister how many fairs has the Enterprise Mauritius organised or participated in?

Mr Soodhun: It's quite a long list I am going to circulate it.

Mr Uteem: As a follow-up to this question, what are the new markets that have been identified by Enterprise Mauritius for our local industries?

Mr Soodhun: For our new markets, we are going to Africa, the Middle East, Japan and China.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on the same item, that is, 25110002 - *Subsidies - Enterprise Mauritius*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will submit a list of overseas missions that has been done by Enterprise Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 394, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants* especially part (b) *AFD PRCC*, can the hon. Minister give us an indication of the names of the consultants and their terms of reference?

Mr Soodhun: Without any problem, Chair, I am going to circulate it.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I will come back on Enterprise Mauritius. Everybody knows, the population knows...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Can the hon. Member put his question?

Mr Bhagwan: This is my question, Enterprise Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, if everybody knows there is no need to tell us again.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I have to qualify. The population is aware.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: The taxpayers are aware of the problems that occurred at Enterprise Mauritius between the Chairperson and the General Manager or Director. Can the hon.

Minister give an indication the House as to who is actually the Chairperson, whether the latter has effected missions recently and whether order has been put in the company?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, the Chairperson is Mr Amedée Darga. All the missions have been controlled by me. Whenever there is any mission, I have to give my approval.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I shall come back to page 394, under item 22120008 - *Fees to consultants (b) AFD PRCC*, can I ask the hon. Minister if there were any tender before the consultants were appointed and if so, can he circulate or table later the tender documents?

Mr Soodhun: The procedure has already been followed.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 394, item 22120007 – *Fees for Training*, may I know who are the beneficiaries of this training exercise and who provide the training?

Mr Soodhun: The beneficiaries are the staff of the Ministry and the experts under the RECP Programme provide the training.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, again under item 22120008 – *Fees to Consultants*, (a) *Development of Framework icw Business Information to Industry and SMEs*, can we have more information from the hon. Minister as to whether there has been a report which has been submitted to the consultant , if not , if ever it has to be, when will it be submitted?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, this project involves local, regional and global business environment. There is a research disseminated to business operators and policy makers. There is also accountability for this.

(Interruptions)

We do have the report.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 388, *Sub-Programme 60203: Assaying and Marking of Jewellery - Ensure protection of consumers against malpractices*, may I know from the hon. Minister how many complaints there have been regarding malpractices by jewellers and whether there has been any seizure of licence for the exportation of gold?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 394, item 22010 – *Cost of Utilities*, we see a sharp increase with regard to what is estimated for 2011. Under another item 22050003 - *Office Sundries*, there is a sharp increase from Rs200,000 to Rs1.8 m. At a time when we are asking everybody to cut down cost, can we have an explanation from the hon. Minister why that increase with regard to these two items?

Mr Soodhun: According to the information that I have received, the provision is for electricity charges, telephone bills, cellular phones, prepaid cards and internet services which have been newly installed.

About the complaint by jewellers, we did not have any complaint from the jewellers up to now.

Mr Baloomoody: It was from members of the public against the jewellers.

Mr Soodhun: According to my information we do not have. Export of gold does not fall under the aegis of Assay office.

Mr Uteem: I am still on item 25, *Subsidies to Enterprise Mauritius*; may I know from the hon. Minister whether Enterprise Mauritius has identified new industries and what is being done to promote these new industries in Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: For the new countries I mentioned Dubai, South Africa.

Mr Uteem: I asked about the new industries.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, it is essentially a question of policy. I will not allow this question, sorry.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 394 item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants* for last year there was a sum of Rs23.1 m. may I know from the hon. Minister whether this sum has been spent and who has been paid this sum regarding consultancy?

Mr Soodhun: As I have just mentioned, I am going to circulate.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 395, under item 22120 - *Fees*, once again we find that fees are being paid, may we know for what services and who are the beneficiaries of these fees?

Programme Code 602: Industrial Development (Rs178,822,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 603: Trade Development was called

Mrs Labelle: On page 396, item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, may we have some details on this item and to whom is this sum allocated?

Mr Soodhun: This sum is for the payment of travelling allowance, travel grants, mileage and bus fare refunds, and overtime allowances.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 396 with reference to the item 22030 - *Rent*, a sum of Rs4,830,000 has been earmarked, can we have some detail of which building is being rented and whether the competition falls under your Ministry?

Mr Soodhun: No. Provision is made for the rent of services charged for three parking slots to Metdor Ltd.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme 603: Trade Development – 21 Compensation of Employees* at page 396, can I take the hon. Minister back to page 388 – *Licence importers of controlled goods to ensure that specific conditions, norms and standards are met for health, environmental and security aspects as well as for national interest*. May I know how many complaints have been received regarding the importation of second hand cars and whether any licence has been cancelled from any importer of second hand cars?

Mr Soodhun: I do not have this information.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same issue, can the Minister inform the House as at to date how many permits for importation of second hand cars have been issued by the Ministry?

Mr Soodhun: Sometimes individuals can import their second hand car and also there is a company, but there is a long list.

Mr Bhagwan: We want to have the total number of permits issued.

Mr Soodhun: 5000 permits.

Mr Bhagwan: Including or excluding individuals?

Mr Soodhun: In total.

Mr Bhagwan: Apart from individuals, can the Minister circulate afterwards the companies or firms engaged in that business?

Mr Soodhun: It is in total. As I have mentioned, the conditions to import are the same both for individuals and companies.

Mr Bhagwan: Has any permit been issued by the Ministry in the same programme for the importation of second hand motorcycles on a grading basis?

Mr Soodhun: No Mr Chairperson. No permit is given to import second hand motorcycles.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 397, *Sub-Programme 60303: Legal Metrology Services*, under item *31122804 - Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*, can the hon. Minister give us an indication of what equipment was purchased in 2010 with regard to compliance testing, measuring instruments and what equipment will be purchased as there is an amount of Rs1.5 m. earmarked for 2011.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 398, with regard to *Sub-Programme 52502: Price Control - 21 Compensation of Employees*, can the Minister tell us how many commodities are subject to price control and how many officers are engaged in exercising price control in his Ministry?

The Chairperson: The first part of the question had been put; I will allow you the second part.

Mr Soodhun: Nineteen.

Mr Uteem: On page 392, *Sub-Programme 60302: Compliance to Import & Export Trade Regulations, Import Division – O1: Import permits and second-hand vehicle dealers licences*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any document or anything is being done at the Ministry to ensure that we do not have stolen vehicles that come to Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Do we insist that we have a genuine certificate from the country importing the car to Mauritius? Do we insist regarding the speedometer?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, it is severely controlled.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether we have had any complaint against members of the public regarding the quality of vehicles some were stolen or tampered with before coming to Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: No Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please. I cannot hear the hon. Member.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, *Sub-Programme 52502 - Price Control*, on page 388, it is being stated ‘Ensure that importers do not sell beyond the maximum allowable price’. May I know from the hon. Minister whether we have got importers or traders who have been booked under this item?

Mr Soodhun: It has been referred to the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection. It is for CPU.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Sub-Programme 60303 - Legal Metrology Services*, I refer to an item number where the Ministry is purchasing new equipment, but I do not find any item with regard to training of officers within that service. Can I have an indication from the Minister as to whether some sort of training is given to the officers at the Legal Metrology Services?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, this is a very technical job so we have to train the officers. Sometimes, we have to call consultants to train these officers.

Mr Bhagwan: Under the same *Sub-Programme 60303*, it is being stated ‘Ensure conformity of weighing and measuring instruments’. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry or this section makes any distinction between the big and small supermarkets or whether they are on the same footing?

Concerning the electronic equipment, I would like to know whether the Ministry is sufficiently equipped to check if the equipment is foolproof. Can the hon. Minister also inform the House the total number of inspections effected during the past three months on these big malls, supermarkets and stores?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, this is done at regional level. We have not only centralised it in the city; we do it for the big and small shops.

Mr Uteem: At page 398, under item 22030 - *Rent*, I note that there is no longer any rent. Can the hon. Minister inform us where the building was and where has the staff moved to now, and whether the Ministry has stopped renting the premises?

Mr Soodhun: It is a Price Fixing Unit which has been relocated within the Ministry. It is in the Air Mauritius building.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 402, *Sub-Programme 60303*, with regard to staffing at the level of the Legal Metrology Services, one of the main constraints stated in the document is that there is a lack of relevant human resource at the level of the Ministry, but I don't find that there is request for increasing the number of officers at the level of the Legal Metrology Services. Can the hon. Minister elaborate on this?

Mr Soodhun: It is a very high technical level. We are going to recruit people, and train them. Normally, within the Ministry, there is a promotion exercise which is done.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 395, *Sub-Programme 60204: Quality Enhancement, Accreditation and Conformity Assessments*, can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the different Ministries and parastatal bodies that are engaged in quality enhancement programme to give better service to the public, and what about the ISO certificate?

Secondly, I would like to know whether Government labs are also taken care of, as far as their accreditation are concerned, what programmes are being prepared and followed by the Ministry and what are the recent laboratories that have obtained these ISO 17025 certificates. How many programmes are underway for accreditation under the ISO 17025 programme?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 397, *Sub-Programme 60303 - Legal Metrology Services*, item 22060 - *Maintenance*. I see there is a considerable decrease in maintenance. I would like to know of which maintenance we are talking about, particularly if there is an increase in acquisition of laboratory equipment. Who is making the maintenance of this equipment? How come that the maintenance has decreased that much? Of which maintenance are we talking about?

Mr Soodhun: The maintenance concerns the IT office, office equipment, photocopy and fax machines. With regard to the previous question concerning the ISO certificate, seven out of nine labs of the MSB are accredited to international norms. The list which has been asked is a long one, so I will circulate it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the laboratory equipment.

Mr Soodhun: I do not have the required information. I will circulate it later.

Programme Code 603 - Trade Development (Rs54,649,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I will put several questions on *Programme 401: Environmental Policy and Management*, under item 26210066 - *Contribution to United Nations (Kyoto Protocol)*. Can the Minister give us a brief? We have paid, we are a member of that organisation and, at present, we are having the Cancun conference. Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the latest news as regards the position of the Small Island States, is there any progress?

The Chairperson: No, I will not allow this question.

Mr Bhagwan: It concerns money. Environment is different, Sir. Environment is not only money.

The Chairperson: No, I have not seen it anywhere; I will not allow this question please. Is there any other query?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 404, *Review of Environment Protection Act 2002*. With regard to the ICZM, can the Minister inform the House how much we are spending and what is the latest concerning this programme? What about the review of the drinking water quality standards? Concerning the noise pollution, how many contraventions had been taken to mitigate the impacts?

Under *Programme 401: Environmental Policy and Management - Review of Hazardous waste regulations for better control*, may we know if there are any site visits or any contraventions taken? I hope this question is being allowed Sir.

The Chairperson: Yes. I will take one by one. I can't digest so many questions at a time. We will start with the ICZM. Hon. Bhagwan, you may be acquainted with it but we are not so acquainted.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, for ICZM, this is a major programme; I have to look at the vote items one by one and then I will reply about the different amounts.

The Chairperson: The cost of the programme for ICZM.

Mr Virahsawmy: This is a major programme. We have it under different vote items, but the total amount for the programme is Rs41 m.

The Chairperson: The next question of hon. Bhagwan was about ESA legislation.

Mr Virahsawmy: Among the recommendations made in the ESA report and which have been approved by Cabinet, amendments have been proposed to the various legislation pertaining to ESA and new legislation have also been proposed.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 411, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*; but my question will be on page 404, the 40 - *EIA licenses issued for major development*. Can the hon. Minister communicate the list of the beneficiaries of these 40 EIA licenses and may we have a specification about the project?

Mr Virahsawmy: I have no problem to circulate that list.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 412, item 26312 – *Local Authorities*, can I ask the hon. Minister what this amount of Rs4 m. represents and why none has been budgeted in 2011?

Mr Virahsawmy: This is an amount which was transferred to the Ministry of Local Authorities and Outer Islands to complete the Action Plan undertaken by the Local Authorities, that is, to control the affixing of posters throughout the island. This was made to safeguard the beauty of the surrounding environment and now it is completed.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on *Programme 401: Environmental Policy and Environment*. I refer to page 404, *Review of Policy on noise pollution to mitigate impacts on excessive noise on human health*. May I know from the hon. Minister who is going to carry out this review? Is there any consultant who will be appointed for this particular work? May we know what is being done by the Ministry right now?

Mr Virahsawmy: There is a committee, Mr Chairperson, which is working on this noise pollution. We are working together with different authorities and stakeholders. We are also establishing a list of equipment which has to be ordered and these are being finalized. In the meantime, the Police Environment attends to all complaints regarding noise.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, may we know who are the Members and Chairperson of this Committee?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Patel, the DEO of the Ministry chairs the meeting. There are nine different Members. I can give the list. We have the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of

Health, the Tourism Authority, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Housing and Lands, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the Commissioner of Police and the Institute of Occupational Health.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 404, with regard to *Programme 401: Environmental Policy and Management*, can we have an indication from the hon. Minister as to how many EIA licences for major development are still pending?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, I can give the information.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has not replied about the hazardous waste regulations. As far as the EIA is concerned, can the Minister inform the House whether the EIA for the plant cement in the Port has already been issued and where matters stand?

Mr Virahsawmy: The EIA was issued a long time back.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister circulate a copy of that EIA certificate in the House?

Mr Virahsawmy: This does not have anything to do with the Budget; it is a policy matter. How can I circulate something which is a policy matter?

Mr Baloomoody: The Minister has undertaken to circulate the document. He cannot now say that he can't circulate.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Virahsawmy: The hon. Member has asked for a list, I will circulate the list. They must be patient.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to the objectives of *Programme 401*, described on page 404, which is essentially on review of legislation or regulations. Other Ministries when they went on to describe their targets, they've played the game of Programme-Based Budgeting by giving deadlines for when these regulations will be reviewed, legislation will be ready. Why is it that under *Programme 401*, at page 408, with the indicators and the targets, there is absolutely nothing corresponding to the objectives of that Programme as described on page 404? None of these five points is mentioned as a target over the next three years.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, I am going to circulate a list of EIAs which I promised to the hon. Member. I am giving a list of 33 EIA Certificates. In any case all the EIAs are on the website of the Ministry, so there should not be any problem.

With regard to the question regarding major services which are under review, I will give the reply in a few minutes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, the reply is not one which is facts and figures. I am asking for an explanation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, do you have any target for the legislation/regulation?

Mr Virahsawmy: No, we have. Although no number has been mentioned in the 2010, there are two regulations that have been promulgated: Environment Protection Regulation 2010, Environment Protection Regulation by the Government Notice 74 of 2010 which is in force since March 2010.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same Programme, Mr Chairperson, I want to know, on page 412, under item 26210065 - *Contribution to Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region*, what is it precisely that we are funding, in terms of a contribution to a Convention, and what are we getting back for that investment? Is there work being done at sub-regional level from which Mauritius benefits?

Mr Virahsawmy: In fact, the objectives are to prevent the degradation of the marine environment and destruction of natural habitats. This is part of the Nairobi Convention. So, it was signed in 1985 and there are different countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Somalia and South Africa which form part of the group. Mauritius is contributing and has also benefited from UNEP: demonstration project for an incinerator in the port, demonstration project for the use of native plants to control soil erosion in the Black River region and an Integrated Water Resource Management. I mean, there is a whole programme which is benefitting from this.

Mr Obeegadoo: I know the list will be circulated. Going back to the programme description on page 404; the hon. Minister just mentioned two regulations which apparently are ready. Will he undertake - since we are being asked to approve the Budget - to circulate the tentative targets for each of these five pieces of legislation or regulations to be reviewed or introduced?

Mr Virahsawmy: There is no problem to circulate that.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 412, under item *Contribution to the General Trust Fund for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants*, can the hon. Minister inform the House where we are actually with the implementation of this Convention?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, for the information of the new hon. Members of the House - the hon. Member has been, himself, Minister of Environment; he knows that very well - it is worth mentioning that this very important Convention which forms part of Stockholm Convention, on POP - which stands for Persistent Organic Pollutants – which is an international legally binding instrument to address global pollution and this will include

pesticides, industrial chemicals, bio products. All these chemicals are known as poisons without passport. So, all this is being implemented and we are getting funding from GEF on this to help for the training and to take care of all these hazardous wastes.

The Chairperson: I hope the hon. Minister had nobody in mind when he answered the question; persistent pollutants. Last question!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 404 *Major Services to be provided for 2011-2013*. Since we have not been provided with performance indicators, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has a timeframe for the review of policy on noise pollution and, if yes, what is the timeframe?

Mr Virahsawmy: In fact, we are doing the work, Mr Chairperson, like I said, we are meeting; we are ordering equipment and all that, so it is being done. It will be finalised. It is under the responsibility of a technical committee to order equipment so we cannot impose a timeframe but very soon it will be done. Most probably, Mr Chairperson, by February, it should be finalised.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management (Rs56,206,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – Programme Code 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 404, can the hon. Minister give us a brief as to where we are? Mention has been made for 12 beaches by 2013. Can the hon. Minister give us the list of these 12 beaches? Under *Programme 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation* the hon. Minister has also mentioned the control of coastal erosion at critical sites. What are the sites which have been chosen and where works have started? *Undertaking of Coastal protection and rehabilitation works at eight critical sites by 2013* - what are the sites? *Carrying out of sixteen air monitoring exercises annually by 2013*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the air monitoring equipment - there was one in Cassis, I mean - is still operational? Is there a mobile one for the monitoring of air quality and is an air quality index being prepared by the Ministry?

The Chairperson: We will start with the first one: *Determination of Lagoon Water Quality Indices (LWQI) for twelve beaches by 2013*. A list of the twelve beaches if you have it.

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, we shall circulate the list of the twelve beaches out of which, for four beaches works have already started and nearly completed in Flic en Flac, Mont

Choisy, Pointe aux Sables and Grand' Baie. I will give the list of the other twelve beaches where work is targeted in 2011.

With regard to the air quality also, it is being tested in different regions. There was one in Cassis but it has been removed and sent to another place.

The Chairperson: Coastal erosion zone; the list of critical sites. Could we take these?

Mr Virahsawmy: With regard to the coastal protection work, in 2011, it is earmarked that works will be done in Cap Malheureux, Bain Boeuf and Poudre D'Or and in 2012, in three other regions. So, finally there are about nine regions where there is beach erosion and we will be attending to the problems.

The Chairperson: I take it that the hon. Minister wants to monitor the sixteen air exercises.

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue asked by hon. Bhagwan.

The Chairperson: The last one, the hon. Member means?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. *Air monitoring exercises and Lagoon Water Quality Index* - the public will see and judge. Can I ask the hon. Minister about the targets at the top of page 409 – it concerns the very same issues that my learned colleague just raised: air monitoring exercises and public beaches for water quality index. How is it that, from 2010 to 2011, we have the very same targets? We are measuring the same fourteen exercises for public beaches whereas this is where the challenge lies and we should be doing more and better.

Mr Virahsawmy: It is easy to say that we should do more; at least we are doing properly what we have to do and we get the proper results. Mr Chairperson, I am circulating the list of fourteen regions where air quality control has been done and then there will be other regions also where it will be done. That is why I say it is a question of doing the work and doing it properly. It is not a question of increasing the quantity, but we have to look at the quality also.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue then will the Minister tell us for 2011 - if he is saying we keep the same targets, but we do it properly and we do it better - how is he envisaging to do this? How are we going to use the funds to better do what we did in 2010 with respect to air monitoring exercises and public beaches?

Mr Virahsawmy: The work is progressing. I mean we will be doing the work. It is not a question of saying that we have to do more, but we have to do what we are doing.

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 413, under item *31122804 - Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment for Air Monitoring*, there is nothing planned to be bought for next year.

Mr Virahsawmy: The equipment has been purchased already.

Dr. S. Boolell: Exactly, this is what I am trying to get to. If the equipment for monitoring already exists because there is nothing planned to be bought, consequently, has it ever been used? Could we actually have a report using this equipment in the Forest Side area for instance where we have air pollution from Ferney Spinning Mills Ltd.?

Mr Virahsawmy: I just replied that this has been used and that air monitoring is done at hot spots. It has been used and we don't need further equipment.

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the Minister table a report on what the Ministry has found?

Mr Virahsawmy: I have no problem to give a report.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Chairperson. I am still on page 413 item *31410402 - Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Rivers/Beaches/Mountain Reserves/Islets*. I have two questions. Regarding the rehabilitation of rivers, I think, last time the Minister said that it was not under his Ministry when I put a PQ. May I know from the hon. Minister how many rivers have been rehabilitated during this present year and whether he has a plan for rehabilitation of rivers for the coming year? This is one. Regarding the rehabilitation of beaches, may I know from the hon. Minister whether filao trees are being planted under the programme?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, with regard to rehabilitation of beaches, we have in 2010 rehabilitated the Grand Bay public beach. Works will be starting very soon. These are very specialised works, I have to say. Rehabilitation of the beach doesn't mean planting a few filao trees. It is to go deep under the filao trees; it depends on the beach itself to do gabion works. At Flic en Flac, part of the work has been done. We will be doing Grand Bay, Pointe aux Sables, Cap Malheureux and Bain Boeuf. We have to understand also that we should not plant any trees within thirty metres of the water mark. In many places, this has not been observed and today we are faced with a situation where we find erosion especially within those thirty metres water mark. The work is being done. Concerning the rivers, we have done 73 dredging works. I can circulate the list of the 73 - part of the rivers and regions where dredging works have been done.

Mrs Labelle: On the same issue, and I consider it important, the hon. Minister has mentioned that we have been planting filao trees during the rehabilitation work. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been apprised of the fact that filao trees are not recommended.

Mr Virahsawmy: No, no. There should not be confusion and the hon. Member should not put words in my mouth. I never said that we are planting filao trees. I said it is not a question of planting filao trees. This is what I said and I also mentioned that we should not plant anything within the thirty metres.

Mrs Labelle: If there is confusion.....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, no, no. I am sorry. It is a question of expert having to deal with this issue. I won't allow something over which we don't have any competency and I'll allow hon. Ameer Meea to make his point on this issue.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chair.....

The Chairperson: No, please, I have ruled on it.

Mr Ameer Meea: Okay, thank you, Mr Chair. On the same item, *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Rivers/Beaches/Mountain Reserves/Islets* – can I ask the hon. Minister if this work has been done in-house or was it contracted out?

Mr Virahsawmy: No, I just said that these are specialised work which has to be contracted out.

Mr Ameer Meea: Since the work has been contracted out, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can circulate a list of the contractors.

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, I don't have any objection.

Mr Bhagwan: Under *Programme 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation - Enhancement of preparedness to combat Oil Spill*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether we had a recent exercise? Normally, there is an exercise for oil spill. When did we have this last exercise? Are we still working within the IOC region for our preparedness and in the coming budget, have provisions been made for additional equipment?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, regarding oil spill, there are regular working sessions and there has been an oil spill response and preparedness training from the 07 to 10 December recently. A lot of preparation work is being done and all this, but I don't think we have bought equipment for this because we have agreements with other countries depending on the phase, on the level. When it is at a higher level, then we get friendly countries to help us in this.

Mr Bhagwan: I know we normally have equipment from donation, but this equipment need to be renewed, maintained. So are there provisions for the coming year for the renewal or maintenance of our equipment?

Mr Virahsawmy: One million has been provided in the Budget for replacement of certain equipment.

The Chairperson: There is no question on the same issue, I'll take hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Chair. I'll refer the hon. Minister to page 408 – *Programme 402 - Environmental Protection and Conservation - O2: Compliance with environmental conventions and protocols*, can the Minister give us an indication because it is stated in that document that the phasing out of POPs, that is, Persistent Organic Pollutants will be completed in December 2012? Can we have an indication what progress has been achieved so far and, with regard to HCFCs which is programme to be phased in December 2011, can the Minister also report on progress? With regard to page 413, under item *31122814 - Acquisition of Air-conditioning Systems*, can we get an indication from the Minister of Environment, what type of equipment is going to be purchased?

Mr Virahsawmy: With regard to POPs, I just mentioned that the programme is on and we are getting the help of GEF which is giving the funding under UNDP. The project, like I said, started in 2009, is going on track and will be completed in time. With regard to the air-conditioning system, this is new air-conditioning ammonia which will be installed at Government Centre and at the National Environment Laboratory. These are ammonia chillers which are ozone friendly, refrigerant as you are aware and which will be used there.

The Chairperson: We have got only one more minute left on that issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: On that issue, on that programme?

The Chairperson: On that programme.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, on the same programme - the National Environmental Laboratory, can the Minister inform the House whether the Ministry has obtained this accreditation for 17025 and when? Has the programme been completed?

Mr Virahsawmy: I'll let you know in a few minutes.

The Chairperson: Last question from hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chair. On page 412, item *22120008 - Fees to Consultants*, there has been a substantial increase from Rs28 m to Rs64 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister it's in relation to what the consultants have been appointed and if he can circulate a list of the consultants?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, fees to consultants - Rs64 m. this is very important because this falls under funding from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Japan is funding Rs90 m. over two years, right, so part of it is allocated in this year and this will cover the Africa Adaptation Programme for climate change. There are twenty

three projects which are being done under this programme again financed by JICA, but under the control of UNDP. UNDP controls that, but it not only concerns the Ministry, but it concerns a lot of other Ministries of Government.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am sorry. I have a time constraint.

Programme Code 402 – Environmental Protection and Conservation (Rs240,355,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 403 – Uplifting and Embellishment of the Physical Environment was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, I am looking at page 406 the total package, the total envelope for this Programme which goes down from Rs228 m. to Rs178 m. So, however happy we were on Programme 402 that the Minister was being given more resources here; it seems there is a drastic cut in the resources and considering pages 413 and 414, I was trying to understand why that was, where is it that the Minister is being required to cut its not staff. On page 416, the staff remains the same. However, on pages 413 and 414, it seems that it is on maintenance and on improvement/upgrading/ rehabilitation of rivers/ beaches/ mountain reserves/islets that there are drastic cuts. How does the Minister reconcile that with what we heard yesterday from the Minister of Tourism rightly as to the need to improve our product and specific sites where tourism, both external and internal, is directly concerned?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, under this programme, a lot of work has been done this year that's why the budget was much more important this year. We have asked for a budget according to work which we feel is left to be done. It is not a question of asking budget just to have the same budget as last year. It is a question of providing for a budget to do the works which have to be done. So, a lot of work has been done already, that's why you see the budget was more important in 2010. We feel that in 2011 there will be less work because already the work had been done, so it will be only a question of maintenance now.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 413 under item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this includes overtime payment and, if it is so, can he explain why are there such huge amounts?

Mr Virahsawmy: Under which item?

The Chairperson: The third item.

Mr Virahsawmy: We have provided for staff and the sum is required to cover the travelling and overtime. This is why it is contracted out.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on page 413 under item 22060011 - *Rivers/Canals*, under this programme too there is the question of maintenance of rivers and canals. If I go to page 406, *Code 403 - Uplifting and Embellishment of the Physical Environment*, may I know from the hon. Minister how many rivers have been embellished, how many rivers have got health tracks? Have health tracks been set up along banks, rivers and so on as per the programme; as stated on page 406? For next year, there is a decrease of Rs2 m., so I think that there will be less work.

Mr Virahsawmy: Which item?

Mrs Labelle: Page 413 item 22060011 and I link that to page 406 where more descriptions are being given. So, how many rivers have been embellished because there will be less and in our Constituency the two colleague Ministers won't say the contrary. All the rivers have remained the same and we are expecting it to be done. So, if less work will be done, I am a bit at a loss.

Mr Virahsawmy: I think there is confusion in the mind of the hon. Member. She is taking her Constituency and she is putting it in this Budget. It is not that.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Virahsawmy: Let me finish. I let you talk. The question of 22060011 Rs4.1 m. where we are providing Rs6.1 m., this is for cleaning of rivers under specific occasions. With reference to the other items which you have mentioned, 55 kilometers of rivers have been cleaned for Rs24 m. so we do not expect the rivers to be cleaned and then the next day they get spoilt again. That's why we have reduced the amount. Mr Chairperson, I am going to circulate a list to show you how we have reached for 55 kilometers of rivers. So, a lot of work has been done.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I am on programme 403 and we are talking about maintenance of rivers. It is not a question of my Constituency, but where are the rivers that have been maintained?

(Interruptions)

As a matter of example...

The Chairperson: No, I won't allow argument, please. I am sorry! We have got 15 minutes per vote and I have taken only two issues. In fact, you have taken an issue about the global sum; it has been diminished by R2 m. I take it, it is a very fair point and also hon. Obeegadoo raised an issue, but I won't allow argument.

Mr Bhagwan: Page 414 item 31410402 - *Improvement/Upgrading/ Rehabilitation of Rivers/Beaches/Mountain Reserves/Islets*. Mention has been made of islets. Can the Minister inform the House whether there is a list of islets or a specific one; what are the islets which the Ministry has in mind in the budget of Rs10 m.? Has a planning already been made for the mountain reserves and what are these mountain reserves? Can we have some details also on the Rs18 m. for item 31410403 - *Improvement/Upgrading/ Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*? When I say ‘other sites’, all the sites where work has already been effected? I take it upon the same item, can the Minister inform the House whether provision is made for the rehabilitation of the jogging tracks where the Ministry, itself, has spent money, like the Signal Mountain, Le Dauguet and the Rose Hill and Quatre Bornes jogging tracks.

There is also SSR Memorial Park, Kewal Nagar. I take it on the same item. I have been there - honestly, I do not blame the officers - as a matter of policy and also work. Is provision being made for the upgrading of this nature park; there was Phase I what about the implementation of phase II?

Mr Virahsawmy: I am very happy, Mr Chairperson, that the hon. Member is visiting the SSR Memorial Park, Kewal Nagar. Thank you! Congratulations! I think you are doing a good work. I am circulating a list of places where we have done all these dredging works. There are 73 points. So, the Member can go through it and see the different places.

The Chairperson: The list is being circulated.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, since the Minister is very happy to answer to our questions, I shall ask him a question on page 414 under the same item 31410402 - *Improvement/Upgrading/ Rehabilitation of Rivers/Beaches/Mountain Reserves/Islets*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if the Lataniers River is included in this project?

Mr Virahsawmy: You will have to come with a specific question.

The Chairperson: No. The list is being circulated. There are 73 sites.

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Mr Bhagwan: On one point I say it for both sides. Can I appeal to you while you will be proceeding that Members, other than the Minister, do not interrupt, if not we will lose time, we are given 15 minutes. So, I am appealing to all my friends not to lose time.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, the same applies on the Opposition side also.

Mr Bhagwan: No, I have said both sides, don’t you worry! If you had listened I have said it. I make an appeal on both sides of the House, we are given 15 minutes. Secondly, the

Minister has promised to circulate the list. Can I appeal through you that we be given the list by this afternoon?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, I'll do better than that, I give it now.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bundhoo, order, please!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am at page 414, under item 31410403 - *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the other sites include the caverns, how many have been upgraded during the past year, and how many will be upgraded?

(Interruptions)

I don't know whether there are Ali Babas there. I know there are Ali Babas somewhere else, but not in this caverne in our Constituency. For example, in Vacoas, we have a lot of caverns. Can we know whether these are included under this programme?

The Chairperson: Are caverns included in the list of other sites?

Mr Virahsawmy: I don't know, Mr Chairperson. I have to check all these caverns.

(Interruptions)

Yes, Caverne Madame is included.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson. I seek your guidance, as to whether it is proper that, when a lady, Member of Parliament, asks a question on *caverne*, the answer should be '*Caverne Madame*', with the innuendo...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is ignorant. *Caverne Madame* exists in Roches Noires so it is no use for him to try to give me any lesson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Be seated both of you, please! You have made your point. Order please! Hon. Obeegadoo, you have not finished with your point?

Mr Obeegadoo: I have not. Irrespective of whether there does or does not exist a *Caverne Madame*, all I am saying is - through you - that I would like to ask you to invite Members to ensure that we do not use any sexist connotations.

(Interruptions)

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, we don't have any lesson to receive. He should check before making any allegation!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! I am satisfied that the hon. Member was referring to something which exists. In fact, if there was any issue of that sort, I would have been the first one to intervene.

Programme Code 403: Uplifting and Embellishment of the Physical Environment (Rs178,205,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 406: Sustainable Development was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 414, under item 31113425 - *Eco-Village Project*, there was a sum of Rs30 m. for this year. May we know where these eco-villages will be set up?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, can the hon. Minister provide us with the definition of that project? Can he also inform the House whether the design of the project will be done in-house, or whether it will be carried out by consultants?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, I am not here to give definitions of a project. The Standing Orders are clear on what we have to say. With regard to the first question, I have to point out that there are nine villages that have been identified by a Technical Committee, which has worked out throughout the different places in Mauritius. It is not a final number. Nine have been earmarked for 2011 to 2013. Different criteria are taken into consideration such as upgrading of the physical environment, waste minimisation, renewable energy, sustainable consumption and production, protection and conservation of biodiversity, and community participation. The village of Pointe aux Piments, Panchavati and Rivière Coco in Rodrigues have been identified, where work will start in 2011. Thereafter, we have Vieux Grand Port, Villemin, La Gaulette, Poudre d'Or, Le Morne, Clementia and Souillac. These villages have been identified, and works will start. Hon. Lesjongard asked whether the works will be done in-house. Part of the work like cleaning, maintenance will be done in-house, but there are other works which will be contracted out. A consultant has been appointed, and that is why hon. Members will see that we have provided Rs5 m. for payment of the consultant who will work out the whole details of the villages. Once this is completed, then work will start. Like I said, this is not a limited amount. If tomorrow we find that we have to include two or more villages, we will do it.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under item 21 *Compensation of Employees*, may I take the hon. Minister to page 406, *Programme 406: Legal and institutional framework for*

Sustainable Development established. Can we have some particulars of the legal and institutional framework? Apparently, it has already been established?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, we have set up one unit which will be responsible for prosecution. Officers of the Ministry have been trained by the State Law Office.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know how many officers there are in that Legal and Institutional Framework Unit?

Mr Virahsawmy: I can give you the information once I have it, but I know that the officers have had a working session. Officials from the State Law Office have come to give them proper training.

Mr Obeegadoo: I wish to thank the hon. Minister for his earlier answer on eco-villages which has helped us to understand. Let me assure him that we strongly support the creation of this programme. Do we understand this to be a new programme linked to the transfer of the MID fund? I notice there is Rs37 m. that is budgeted for this year - none for last year. I am referring to page 406. Do we take it that this is the MID Fund and, if so, the programme objective as described relates to the policy, strategy and action plan? May I, then, ask whether he will agree to include as a target - and we discussed this at length - the development of an Action Plan for the MID concept?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, this is already being done. The hon. Prime Minister has talked lengthily on this. I have explained that we have appointed Prof. Odendaal to work on this.

(Interruptions)

He is already working on this, and will finish in February/March. MID forms part of sustainable development. We have already started the work. We are working on a green paper, on a road map and an action plan.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 414, under item 2212008 - *Fees*, a sum of Rs5 m. has been earmarked.

Mr Virahsawmy: As I just mentioned, Mr Chairperson, when we were talking that we have appointed a consultant to do the work. It is payment for the consultant.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, coming back to the Eco-Village Project, do I understand that there is not any action plan for these targeted villages, or is it going to be worked out now?

Mr Virahsawmy: We said that there is a Master Plan for all this, and it will be done. That is where we have identified Rivière Coco in Rodrigues. There is a plan on which the consultant is working for each village, because each village will have its own specificities.

Mr Uteem: On the issue of *Fees* under item 22120, we heard the hon. Minister say that Prof. Odendaal has been appointed. May I know whether there was request for proposal for other people also to bid to become a consultant?

Mr Virahsawmy: It is not a question of other people, it is question that this was advertised according to tendering procedures so anybody who wanted to tender could do so.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, do I take it that this amount of Rs37 m. corresponds to the idea of an MID Fund? I think this is very positive that we should have budgeted that amount of money. I have two questions; first, do we have a tentative target as to when the Action Plan would be ready for circulation to the public? My second question: the amount is significant, Rs37 m., which is nearly 10% of the budget. However, in terms of staffing, at page 417, we have only 4 members of staff for that programme. Does the Minister consider that this will be adequate to assist him in developing an Action Plan along those lines?

Mr Virahsawmy: No, no. I think there is a small confusion which we have to correct. There is no question of Rs37 m. for MID, I do not know where the hon. Member has seen that figure. It is not in that budget. MDI is wider than Rs37 m. MDI is like the hon. Prime Minister explained and hon. Ganoo agreed that even the Opposition will have to work together with Government on this MID concept. Whatever amount will be required, the Ministry of Finance will arrange for it. This is Rs30 m. for the eco-village and Rs5 m. for the consultant which comes to Rs35 m.

For the MDI, we are going to talk on much wider terms where the objects will be defined very clearly. I must say that Prof. Odendaal has had national consultations already with nearly 50 organisations, which are non-governmental organisations and different associations. He met these people already to get the feeling of the public on this question of sustainable development.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to make an appeal. I think this is important. We have learned it is positive that the MID Fund is going to environment. So, we are going to have the eco-villages plus more money for the MID Fund. I would suggest to the Minister that some rearrangement in terms of staffing be looked into so that we have a good team with more than four people to work on this programme. Right now, it is only four people for a programme of Rs37 m.

Mr Virahsawmy: We will recruit as and when required. In fact, we are working on recruiting certain specialised people under capacity-building.

Programme Code 406: Sustainable Development (Rs 37,507,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology - Programme Code 741: Policy and Management for Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to the sums being budgeted for Programme 741 on page 423, it is a general sum. This is my entry point. I would then refer the Minister back to page 419 which has the constraints and the achievements. I just want to raise an issue of clarification with the Minister and I'll do this in a friendly manner, there is no offence meant. The achievements refer to a gross tertiary enrolment ratio of 45%. I would like to submit to the Minister that this figure cannot be right; everybody agrees that we are making good progress. It cannot be right. The official UNESCO figures, I am quoting the EFA Global Monitoring Report, refer to 14% as our enrolment ratio for 2007. This has improved, but it cannot be 45%. If it were 45%, it would mean that we would be at par with Switzerland or Austria in terms of tertiary enrolment. A mere suggestion to the Minister and he is not to be blamed - Ministers do not invent figures; it is just an invitation so that we could be guided in our discussion of the budget eventually – not today - to take time to consider and review these figures. We are willing to help there.

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member is wrong and allow me to bring about some clarification. First of all, I do not decide on these figures as these are offered to me by the Tertiary Education Commission. The figures that we have for this year are 46.9% and I want to explain how. The gross tertiary education ratio is the student population, excluding foreign students, divided by the population aged 20-24 which amounts to 45,449 divided by the population aged 20-24, which is 96,867 - these are CSO figures - multiply by 100 which gives 46.9. The student population is 45,994 minus the average foreign students which is 545, which gives the figure of 45,449. Then Mr Chairperson, I did ask as well because I understand the hon. Member's concern and his knowledge of the subject. This is the ratio that is actually used by all authorities, be it UNESCO or TEC or any other institution worldwide. I do not decide on the parameters. This is the parameter that is used and this is the parameter that I am going to stick to.

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, I will not engage in a debate.

The Chairperson: Of course! You made your point.

Mr Obeegadoo: We will discuss this in another forum. My question is, since the programme refers to policy and management services, the targets do not mention any White Paper or Strategy Plan. May I suggest to the Minister that - using the funds we are going to approve – and happily approved - for this year for his Ministry - an indicator be developed to be brought before us next year whereby we have a target of a strategy document in coordination with Minister Dr. Bunwaree, charting the way forward for our tertiary sector.

Dr. Jeetah: I do not want to sound nasty, but I suspect the hon. Member has not read the document. It is well stated that we are currently working on a strategic note and I will come back to you.

The Chairperson: The point is noted and the Minister will take whatever measure in that respect for next year.

Dr. Jeetah: On page 419 ...

The Chairperson: If it is there, there is no qualm about it. The point was made and we proceed further.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 424, I note that there is an item for non-residential buildings which is not for this coming year, but for 2012, it refers to the construction of a new university park. Could we have some information, is this the area which had been earmarked long ago behind Apollo Hospital and what will it accommodate? It is where the UTM campus will go? Secondly, linked to that, some time back, there had been talk of a residential campus at Le Réduit. Will that park also accommodate the residential campus?

Dr. Jeetah: Let me bring some light with reference to the first question on target. Mr Chairperson, we have clearly spelt out that we would like to see one graduate per family. Currently, the gross tertiary enrolment rate being 47%, we would like to achieve 72% in the next five years.

The Chairperson: No, no, please. The question is: where will the park be situated.

Dr. Jeetah: No, the hon. Member did ask in a previous question. So, the target is clear; it has to be 72% in the next five years.

Now, with regard to construction, we have a sum of Rs100 m. that has been earmarked for the construction of a hall of residence at the University of Mauritius. I know consultants have been recruited and the work is on.

With regard to extra facilities, at the moment, we have ...

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister just repeat the answer, please?

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to a hall of residence, a sum of Rs100 m. has been earmarked and we have already recruited consultants and the work is on. Actually, I had a chance to meet with ...

The Chairperson: Sorry, I'm lost also. I don't see any allocation here. The hon. Minister said Rs100 m. Are we under item *31112 - Non-Residential Buildings* on page 424?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member just raised a general question.

The Chairperson: No, no we were at a specific issue at page 424 regarding the *Construction of a New University Park*. The question was whether it is going to be situated at Réduit, that's what I understand.

Dr. Jeetah: That was the original plan, Mr Chairperson, but now we are reviewing the situation and it is policy now for the Government to have sites around the island. So, now we have recruited a consultant; it is Lux Consult. We are working a Master Plan that would be established in different regions in Mauritius. There would be Réduit, of course, that's the original space; there would be Pamplemousses, Piton, Montagne Blanche and Rose Belle.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, still on this item, we are talking of the New University Park, but from what the hon. Minister has just mentioned, I think, I have heard as if we are going to have different campus in different parts of the country. Does this University Park relate to the different campus that the hon. Minister has just mentioned? This is my first question.

Secondly, from what my colleague has asked, we have been talking about a residential campus at Réduit; may I know whether this sum includes this project? Is it in the new University Park? We are having some confusion.

Dr. Jeetah: I did explain Mr Chairperson that we are working on a Master Plan which would be a new University Campus and we do not see why this same could be replicated elsewhere.

Now, with regard to the Rs100 m., I think, I need some assistance from my finance officers to tell me where the Rs100 m. fit in.

The Chairperson: We are essentially at a stage of considering budget allocation, but since it is a new Ministry, I'll allow some questions about the general policy orientation of the Ministry, but we should not dwell on that issue also.

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course. I agree that the first question from hon. Obeegadoo was essentially a general comment. Yes!

Mr Baloomoody: Coming back to that issue of University Park, may I ask the hon. Minister what we are talking about. Is it campus for the University or is it residential area for university students? If it is residential, why – I have found that there will be one in Montagne Blanche in his Constituency; will there be a University there? What are we talking about University Park?

The Chairperson: Yes. The hon. Member made his point. I understand that the hon. Minister stated that there is going to be a Master Plan. He is contemplating to prepare a Master Plan. We are going to wait for that Master Plan.

Dr. Jeetah: Allow me, Mr Chairperson, to clarify. First of all, there is a provision of Rs5 m. for 2011 under HRKAD Fund for the whole residence.

Secondly, with regard to *campus universitaire*, we tried to make sure that a child would be able to have access to a university. So what we are proposing to do - not only in my Constituency, it's around the island – is to have in different regions a *campus universitaire*.

The Chairperson: Next item!

Dr. Jeetah: It wouldn't be only the public sector, but we would encourage the private sector as well to come and invest in an open university in Mauritius.

The Chairperson: All right! The hon. Minister has made his point.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, you referred to a Master Plan.

The Chairperson: The Minister referred to it.

Mr Obeegadoo: The Chair had referred to a Master Plan and the document refers to a comprehensive and coherent Sector Strategic Plan which we welcome. Could I be given some indication as to when the Ministry targets that such a plan will be ready because that will be crucial for a national consensus on how we move forward and can I link that to a second concern I have about staffing on page 427? I appreciate that the hon. Minister is creating from nothing a new Ministry, but, on this first programme which is about policy formulation, I note that the hon. Minister will not benefit from specialised technical expertise. Apart from the Tertiary Education Commission which is a regulator, will the hon. Minister consider - within the Budget that he has - the need to have consultants and advisers to assist him in forging ahead as fast as possible with this Strategic Plan?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I happen to be in charge of a Ministry where I have some of the brightest people in this country. I happen to have the Vice-Chancellors, the Director of Tertiary Education Commission and his officers. I happen to have my Director of Service and my Permanent Secretary. So, I think that I have a team that has the capability of

offering the service that would go in line with the vision of the Prime Minister, where we would like to have one graduate per family.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a question on the same issue. Will the hon. Minister have resort to external consultancy services on this issue of the comprehensive and coherent Strategic Plan and I will put my question for a third time, very politely, asking the hon. Minister what is the target?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants to know the target.

Dr. Jeetah: I am in a hurry as well. With regard to target, I would expect a draft by the end of this year - the person, who is writing it, is here somewhere. With regard to competence from overseas, I know that we are part of the COL and, of course, we would look into the possibility - I see the target is June 2011 so we'll have to make sure that we get it before that. We do use competencies from overseas as well.

Programme Code 741: Policy and Management of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Rs40,594,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 742: Tertiary Education was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 424, under item 26313008, I am referring to (f) *Mauritius College of the Air/Open University of Mauritius*. I note that a sum of Rs84.4 m. was earmarked for this year; the sum remains the same for the coming year and there is a projection of a decrease for the two coming years. Will the hon. Minister give us some explanations? What will be the activities of the new Open University? Will they be less than the activities carried out by the MCA with less money?

The Chairperson: The question is: why is there a decrease in the sum?

Mrs Labelle: Not only why, will there be a decrease in the activities from MCA to Open University? Are we expecting less from this institution?

Dr. Jeetah: Allow me Mr Chairperson, to make the life of my learned friend easier and let me refer to the whole budget actually. If one was to look at my budget, it has every year been reduced to a lower figure from a height of Rs752 m. so that would help other institutions. I do not think that it is a question of having more money from Government to be able to do well; a lesser amount would not mean that we would be doing a lesser number of activities. I have requested the Tertiary Education Commission to try to see how we can fund these institutions ourselves. Let me give you an example. For all our TEI's in 2011, we estimate a revenue of Rs550 m. and for 2013 we are estimating a revenue of Rs729 m. I can guarantee the hon. Member that we will have an open university that will continue doing the work that it is doing with the primary schools in relation to preparing course material and also

it will give chance to people to study at their own pace. We are hoping that we would be able to have a significant share of the African market as well.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to item 26313008 at page 424 – (c) *University of Technology, Mauritius*. I find that the budget is nearly the same. It comes down to Rs54 m. when, in fact, we know that there is much request from that University. Firstly, it is expanding and secondly, the environment - I don't know whether the hon. Minister has been there - where *c'est la terre* at the campus. I am making that request because I have received a request from the union that the student can't even walk around in the yard. *Il fait trop chaud*, it is dry, there is no grass and they can't even eat their food in the yard. Hon. Bodha was with me last time, we were invited there. My question is whether a specific allowance could be made for the improvement of the environment for the benefit of the students?

Dr. Jeetah: Let me correct the hon. Member. These sums are not for UTM per say. There are two institutions by the name of Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, that is, the SDIM, as well as the Institut Supérieur de Technologie. Currently these two institutions fall under the UTM and the funds are allocated to UTM, but, in fact, the UTM only gets about Rs5 m. from Government. They have reached a stage where they bring in their own revenue. I do agree that it is very dry. In fact, I was there this morning itself - it was not in that school. It is very dry and I pray that it starts raining soon, but I do appreciate the concern of my good friend here. It has been the strategy of Government to increase the number of students to allow access to these institutions but, Mr Chairperson, I did mention that we have earmarked a fund of nearly Rs800 m. to build new facilities. It is just a question of couple of years where we would have all these modern facilities.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 424, if you compare the budget of the University of Mauritius and the UTM with that of Mahatma Gandhi Institute (Tertiary), you will find that the budget of MGI (Tertiary) is half that of the University of Mauritius and almost three times that of UTM. Can I know what number of degree courses or tertiary studies and services are given at MGI and how many graduates come out of the MGI every year?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member has raised a very good point. Mr Chairperson, I asked the same question when I had a meeting with my staff or my colleagues. I can circulate all the courses being offered at the University of Mauritius...

The Chairperson: Please, the Minister should be brief if he can!

Dr. Jeetah: Can I refer my hon. friend to this document - Participation in Tertiary Education 2009. He will have all the information, but there is a valid point whereby

financially it is much higher. If you were to benchmark the University of Mauritius with its 11,000 students and a lesser number at MGI, but then the thing is that when I talked to the heads of departments, they give me an example. In one Tamil class there was one student; for other classes they had very few students. We are working together to see how we can increase the student numbers to make it comparable in terms of ratios, for example, they could be doing English and Tamil, or Hindi and Mandarin etc. They are working on it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 421 which put figures to the targets in terms of undergraduates to qualify and also to page 424 which gives precise figures as to budgetary allocations to different TEIs - Tertiary Education Institutions. My question concerns quality and I would wish to ask the Minister of the sixty one institutions mentioned in the Budget Speech. How many are deemed to be degree awarding institutions? In the past, as the Minister is aware, all these other institutions: MGI, Swami Dayanand Institute of Management and so on had to award degrees jointly with either the University of Mauritius or UTM which were the only two degree awarding institutions. I want to know whether that is still the case. Secondly, how many Universities do we have? The University is not just about teaching, but about research and knowledge creation.

Dr. Jeetah: I can certainly circulate the information, but may I tell the hon. Member from memory, we have the University of Mauritius; UTM, SDIM and IST fall under the purview of UTM; MGI is under the University of Mauritius. With regard to the private sector, I understand there are two institutions that are deemed to be degree awarding and they have applications from others, but that is the situation at the moment.

Mr Obeegadoo: Are universities recognized as such?

Dr. Jeetah: Universities, I understand there is...

The Chairperson: No, the Minister stated that he is going to circulate the list.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes.

The Chairperson: I'll prefer that.

Dr. Jeetah: Let me respond further to the hon. Member. We are working on a legislation to merge the IST and SDIM into a university and now we believe that MGI as well has reached a status whereby MGI and RTI could achieve the university status.

Mr Uteem: In relation to item 26313008 - (g) *Fashion & Design Institute* at page 424 *Grants to Fashion & Design Institute* and item 26323008 *Capital Grant - (g) Fashion & Design Institute* at page 425, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether any provision is being made for the re-location of the *Fashion & Design Institute* and if so, to which location?

Dr. Jeetah: I think we have to set our priorities right. I did mention that we have got a fund of Rs800 m. to build more infrastructure and the challenge there is to get the school upon going. We had some challenges. When you merge the institutions together, it does take a certain amount of time for people to settle down and get to do well. The priority is to get an institution that would offer courses of very high quality that would gain confidence of the people. This will be my priority, Mr Chairperson. Once that is done, then we will look into the possibility of moving into some other facilities.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I come back to the Fashion and Design Institute. At pages 4 to 5 under the *Capital Grant*, there is a budget of Rs5 m. for the coming year and there was Rs5 m. for this current year. We see that there is a sum of Rs5 m. for the two coming years. May we know from the hon. Minister whether this *Capital Grant* of Rs10 m. over these two years and Rs10 m. for next two years will be allocated for what use?

The Chairperson: The breakdown of the figure is forthcoming. Hon. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: I refer to page 424, item 22130001 - *Study on review of Regulatory Framework for Tertiary Education*. Could we have some clarification as to who is conducting the study - foreign consultants or is it an in-house study? Do we have a kind of a timeframe for a report on it?

Dr. Jeetah: I understand it is the World Bank that has agreed to conduct this review and with regard to the...

The Chairperson: Rs 5 m.; *Fashion & Design Institute*.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, this is mainly in relation to equipment and furniture for the FDI.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I go back to the *Tertiary Education Institutions*. We are being asked to vote quite a sizeable amount of money - Rs752 m., for these institutions. As a measure of cost efficiency, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what mechanism is being put into place to ensure effective coordination between these institutions to avoid overlapping and wastage in public expenditure.

Dr. Jeetah: Once again, it is a very good question. I must thank the hon. Member since he has got a lot of experience in this field. First of all, you have to understand that this is a new Ministry. We are working on a strategic plan and all this will have to be taken care of. I have already started a process where I have started cutting down the amount of funding that would be required by the State. Our strategy is, for example, for the University of Mauritius. For every undergraduate student that we will have, we will have an equivalent two

third of post graduate students and a third that would be funded by an external student on the same model as that is being done with the University of London. To cut short, we are working on all these to be able to rationalise and make sure that the funds are used efficiently.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Does it have to be the last, I have a few questions?

The Chairperson: Yes, we have got a time constraint!

Mr Obeegadoo: Okay, I will ask a two in one then. Under the item *22130001 - Study on review of Regulatory Framework for Tertiary Education*, again I wish to commend the hon. Minister, this is a very worthy initiative. May we know what is the target date for the conclusions of this study to be made public whether it will be in the course of the next financial year? My final point concerns the University of Technology, Mauritius (HRKAD Fund). There are no monies budgeted for 2011 although the budget has announced - as the hon. Minister said earlier – the setting up of campuses around the island. So, are we to understand there will be no expenditure on the establishment of those regionalised campuses during the next financial year?

Dr. Jeetah: I think the capital is on page 600 or something. For the year 2011, there is Rs72 m. Now, with regard to this international best practice, with a view to review our regulatory framework, I understand the target is December 2011.

Programme 742 – Tertiary Education (Rs764,722,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme 743 – Harnessing Research, Innovation, Science and Technology for National Development was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions pertaining to page 422, the indicators and targets. Let me, once again, commend the hon. Minister for the efforts concerning research in general. *P1 Number of participants in outreach activities in science and technology*, may we know what is meant by outreach activities for which we have 1,400 planned for 2011? The second question which is on the *Mauritius Research Council (MRC) - P1: Number of research outputs developed for potential commercial utilisation*, I would like to have some clarifications, please. This refers to the MRC whereas it is to be expected that our universities - the University of Mauritius, the UTM - should be engaging in research that could have commercial repercussions that could lead to commercial income generating activities.

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to the first one, Mr Chairperson, what we have done is that we have taken our Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre (RGSC) out to the community and we have

visited eight regions, the latest one being in Barkly; the next one will be on Sunday in Trou d'Eau Douce where there will be a regatta. I know the figures; we have had 20,000 people who have attended so far. So, it is much higher than these 1,000. I mean, this, I presume, must have been written some time ago. This is on and the target that we have set ourselves for 2011 is 50,000. This *Caravane de la Science* is taking out scientific tools to make our students interested in science. With regard to research, we have started a new process where now we have started having what we call business angels meetings. It is being coordinated by the MRC I must say. MRC is getting all the researchers in Mauritius, the potential ones, who've got ideas that could be developed. They have had a number of meetings. I know one at the University of Mauritius with the Department of Agriculture, one at Middlesex University and others. So, they are getting people with funds and people with ideas and, I understand, that now they have started getting this culture of getting start ups from bright ideas.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am happy that our universities will be challenged on the research front. We welcome the creation of this new programme and I see there is a new department at the Ministry, on page 427, which is to be created. May I ask whether the recruitment process for the positions of *Director* and *Assistant Director* is on, whether these positions will be filled from within the Ministry or - as I hope it will be - it will be open to persons from the outside to apply and come in on being contractual positions, so we can recruit the best brains available?

Dr. Jeetah: One thing that is sure, I would like to get the best brains into my Ministry and we are working on the scriptures so that we can get it as soon as possible, but you will agree that it is very difficult to find those rare birds, but the process is on.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 425, item 22130 - *Studies & Surveys*, we see that there are two. Under item 22130001 - *Studies and preliminary projects*, there was a sum of Rs1 m. for this year and I think this is the same project which is going on. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received any preliminary report on these studies which are here, say since one year or two?

Dr. Jeetah: I must say, yes, I have seen a number of documents from MRC. I can circulate a list of research works that is on so that the hon. Member can get acquainted with the research that is being done.

Programme 743 – Harnessing Research, Innovation, Science and Technology for National Development (Rs64,724,000) and (Rs870,040,000) were, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Youth and Sports – Programme 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports (Rs14,446,000) was called.

The Chairperson: Do you have anything on Code 681? You should be prompt to intervene. Page 440!

Mr Quirin: Concerning *Programme 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports*, page 429, is there any policy paper that has been circulated?

The Chairperson: No please sorry. We are just going to guide you. You refer to page 429 which sub-part.

Mr Quirin: *Policy and Management for Youth and Sports* - I am just asking my friend, the hon. Minister, if there is any policy paper that has been circulated pertaining to the policy of his Ministry?

The Chairperson: Is there any policy paper?

Mr Ritoo: There is a policy paper.

Mr Quirin: I would like to ask the hon. Minister what are the measures that he is going to take because it is mentioned that the Ministry is going to upgrade the level of sports and football, in particular? What are the measures his Ministry is going to take to upgrade the level of sports and football in particular and to improve the framework for better management and increased accountability of Sports Federations as mentioned on page 429.

Mr Ritoo: It will be clearly spelt out in the policy.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the issue just raised the Minister answered that there is a policy paper which I do not seem to have seen. Has that policy paper been completed? Or are we budgeting funds for a policy paper to be produced in the course of 2011?

Mr Ritoo: The information will be circulated.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: the hon. Minister has mentioned a policy paper, it cannot be circulated. I am asking whether the policy paper exists or whether the funds we are budgeting will allow...

Mr Ritoo: The answer is very simple. We have a policy paper and it will be circulated.

The Chairperson: It was answered yes and it is going to be circulated. Hon. François!

Mr François: My question concerns medical insurances. I am referring to page 430 - *Medical insurance to athletes whereby sports federations should, under the Sports Act provide an insurance cover to all licensees*. I would like to know which federations are not abiding to medical insurance and whether the Ministry will take responsibility for full

insurance cover to all licensed athletes. Perhaps the hon. Minister would be agreeable to answer.

The Chairperson: If the Minister wants to respond I have no problem.

Mr Ritoo: As per the Sports Act, all federations are supposed to insure their athletes.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 429, *Programme 681: Improving operational framework to upgrade the level of Sports and to empower the Youth*. Can the Minister inform the House how many youth centres actually are in operation? Where are they situated and whether programmes have been earmarked for the end of this year? Can the Minister circulate the activities for the common month later on? What is the budget for the different youth centres individually not only for the end of the year, but for the common month? On the same programme, I am coming to Sports Federations. How many sports federations do we have actually? I mean the number. What Sports Federations are lagging behind in terms of registration or which are not in conformity? I have another question under the same programme - *Revitalising local football and upgrade the level*. Can the Minister inform the House whether the budget vote has been increased to upgrade our football? Have we an international coach? How many international matches are planned to revitalise our local football? Is any new sports complex being earmarked to revitalise our football? Secondly, under the same item, have funds been earmarked *pour rendre hommage à feu Mamade Elahee. Est-ce qu'il y a suffisamment d'argent? Quels sont les votes?*

The Chairperson: Regarding the first item, I understand the Minister is going to circulate the information about the activities for youth centres for the year.

Mr Ritoo: The hon. Member gave a long list of requirements. All of them will be compiled and circulated. We have got 41 Sports Federations and each one has its own budget and it will be available on the website of the Ministry. We are working on that.

The Chairperson: The last one was regarding homage to Mamade Elahee.

Mr Ritoo: Of course we are going to pay homage to Mamade Elahee.

The Chairperson: Is there any budget allotment made to pay homage to Mamade Elahee?

Mr Ritoo: Yes.

Mr Bhagwan: You have earmarked for vote, vote means money. We are all experienced persons and the Minister can circulate the information. Website does not concern us, we are in Parliament. You have to give us the answer. You can circulate it later.

(Interruptions)

One minute hon. Minister be patient! He is our friend and we are not hitting at him. For the time being!

(Interruptions)

If he makes us nervous then we'll be no longer friends! What we want Mr Chairperson it is Rs100,000, it is Rs200,000, circulate we will have it later on. What is the budget? Rs100,000, Rs200,000! This is what we want to know.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Chairperson, I will compile and circulate the information.

Mr Quirin: I have one question Mr Chairperson. Toujours concernant le *Programme 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports*, item 22060 *Maintenance*, il y a une baisse drastique. Il y avait une somme R 1,165,000 pour 2010 et là je vois que cette somme a été ramenée à R 165,000. C'est bon qu'on fasse des économies mais est-ce-que le ministre peut expliquer ce qui a nécessité cette baisse?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Chairperson, the decrease in the cost of goods and services is due to a reduction in the cost of maintenance. In fact, a one-off provision was made in 2010 Budget for the tiling of floors in the Ministry's headquarters. Regarding the question of hon. Bhagwan, we have got 41 Sports Federations and the sum is Rs40m. for all the federations.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to Major Achievements on page 429 – *100 sensitisation activities organised targeting some 10,000 young persons in the age group 14-29 on social issues relating to HIV Aids, Drugs*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could kindly communicate to us the place where these activities were held - the area, town or village or the school or club? Will he tell us whether there is a follow-up of these activities and, if so, what is the sum allocated to this specific activity?

Mr Ritoo: I have got the list. The sensitisation activities were held in all our youth centres, in the schools. Many NGOs organised them with the collaboration of the officers of my Ministry. It was held in all our 23 youth centres.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask whether there is a specific unit in the Ministry for these activities and, if so, how many personnel do we have in that unit?

Mr Ritoo: Well, all the officers are working in our youth centres where there is one Senior Youth Officer and the staff there.

Programme Code 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports (Rs14,446,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports was called.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais demander quelques précisions au ministre des sports. Premièrement, à la page 435, item 22090 - *Security*, je vois qu'il y avait R 600,000

pour 2010 et pour 2011 R 1,6 millions pratiquement. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous donner des explications?

Mr Ritoo: The increase is due to the fact that we have awarded a new contract to Rapid Security Services.

Mr Quirin: Une autre question, M. le président. Sous l'item 22120 - *Fees*, la somme passe de R 1,7 millions à R 8,7 millions. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous donner des explications?

Mr Ritoo: The increase is due to the participation of our national teams and federations in major sports events, including the Indian Ocean Islands Games (IOIG).

Mr Quirin: Toujours à la même page, item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, cela passe de R 24 millions à R 41 millions. Qu'est-ce qui a nécessité, dans sa globalité, cette augmentation ?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 429, *Programme 682: Promotion and Development of Sports - Detection of athletes for High Level Sports*. Can the Minister inform the House what is the number of athletes for High Level Sports we have in Mauritius and their different disciplines? Secondly, under *Provision of financial incentives to High Level Athletes*, is there any provision for the coming year? Can the Minister circulate the list; the grading of the different incentives, and also the different increases? Under item *Increase the number of national sports training centres*, can we know which disciplines? Under item *Setting up of a National Institute of Sports*, where will it be situated and have any preliminary works started?

Mr Ritoo: I'll answer to hon. Quirin. Under item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, the increase in provision is for the payment of accommodation costs, air tickets, catering, sports equipment, medals, prizes and pocket money for athletes participating in overseas sporting events, including the IOIG and the 2011 All Africa Games. For example, for the IOIG, air tickets will cost over Rs6 m.; participation fees Rs6 m. and pocket money for athletes above Rs3 m.

The Chairperson: What about *High Level Sports*?

Mr Ritoo: For *High Level Sports*, we have more than 80 high level athletes actually in the High Level Sports Unit which is a unit within my Ministry. It defines all the criteria for athletes being eligible for the incentives given at the High Level Sports Unit.

Mr Quirin: Concernant l'item *Promotion and Development of Sports*, le ministre vient de parler des athlètes qui vont participer aux compétitions internationales l'année prochaine mais rien n'est mentionné en ce qui concerne les jeux des îles dans le budget. Est-ce qu'il peut nous dire sous quel code va-t-il puiser le financement nécessaire pour la

préparation des athlètes? Est-ce qu'il pourrait circuler les sommes qui seront allouées à chaque fédération dans le cadre justement de leur préparation?

Mr Ritoo: The hon. Member is aware that we have a new system of budgeting, called the PBB, compared to the traditional line item budget. So, this is the reason why item IOIG does not properly appear in the Budget. However, provision for expenditure, in connection with IOIG, has already been made under *Sub-Programme 68201: High-Level Sports*. All the expenses in connection with air tickets, passage and everything will be met from that item.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under *Sub-Programme 68202: Sports for All*, I refer to the global allocation, and I want to know from the Minister whether provision is being made for the MSSSA - yesterday, this was referred to by Minister Bunwaree - in conjunction with the Ministry of Health as regards sports culture and sports activities.

Mr Ritoo: We have already earmarked Rs1 m. which we give regularly to the MSSSA to organise all the activities regarding sports at school level - intercollege games.

Mr Lesjongard: At page 436, item 28212015 - *Other Current Transfers - Allowances to High Level Athletes*, can the Minister give us the names of officers or persons sitting on the committee looking after those high level athletes and who chairs that committee? Can the hon. Minister also tell us when the criteria were last reviewed?

Mr Ritoo: We have a committee. I have no problem to circulate the names of the managing committee and all the criteria regarding the eligibility to benefit from the High Level Sports Unit.

Dr. S. Boolell: I would like to put a question to the hon. Minister under *Sub-Programme 682*, item 26313032 - *Current Grant - Mauritius Arbitration Commission for Sports*, at page 436. I would like to know what would happen or what has happened to the Mauritius Arbitration Commission for Sports and the National Council for Drug-Free Sports, which have no budgetary allocation for next year.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Chairperson, the Mauritius Arbitration Commission for Sports has not yet been set up by the National Olympic Committee. In fact, it is the National Olympic Committee which is supposed to set up the Mauritius Arbitration Commission for Sports. The National Council for Drug-Free Sports has not yet been constituted though the work is already being done by the Sports Medical Unit of my Ministry. The functioning of the Mauritius Arbitration Commission for Sports is being reviewed in the forthcoming Sports (Amendment) Bill, and the Council will also be set up upon the amendments coming into force.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'avais précédemment demandé au ministre des précisions concernant les sommes qui seront allouées aux fédérations par rapport aux jeux des îles. Il n'a pas répondu à ma question. Peut-il repréciser - je sais qu'il l'a dit, mais je n'ai pas bien écouté probablement - le code sous lequel les sommes seront puisées pour les jeux des îles pour la préparation des athlètes ?

Mr Ritoo: I think I did answer it.

The Chairperson: I understand the Minister referred to the High Level Sports.

Mr Ritoo: Yes. I also stated that the Federation will allocate the sum, let's say approximately Rs40 m., and the athletes will utilise a maximum amount from this Fund because the IOIG is the most important event for any federation next year.

Comme c'est la compétition la plus importante dans les îles, donc, ils sont supposés puiser leur somme d'argent du budget qui leur sera alloué. Il y a R 40 millions qui vont être allouées aux fédérations.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 436, under *Sub-Programme 68202: Sports For All*, item 26313045 - *Current Grant - Mauritius Sports Council*, can we know why it has decreased from Rs21,5 m. to Rs19 m.?

Mr Ritoo: The provision is for the allocation of grant to the Mauritius Sports Council which is running its own expenses. The decrease does not mean that the expenses of the MSC have gone down. Instead, the MSC will meet part of its expenses from a surplus cash balance of around Rs2 m. as at 31 December 2010. Moreover, the MSC is expected to generate some additional funds revenue through rental of sports infrastructure.

Mr Uteem: On page 437, under item 31113006 *Construction of Sports Infrastructure*. In his Budget Speech, the hon. Minister said that there will be the construction of a football playground in Tranquebar. May I know under which item it falls?

Mr Ritoo: There is Rs1 m. earmarked. There is a survey report for the Tranquebar Stadium, but don't forget that we also get funds from the Lotto.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, Order!

Mrs Labelle: On page 433, *Sub-Programme 68202 – Sports For All* under 02: *Provision of sports opportunities for women*. Is there any particular initiative for the increased participation of women in sports activities? Still under this same programme, when I go to page 441, I take, for example, coach swimming. May I know how many women coaches there are for this particular activity?

Mr Ritoo: Equal opportunities are given to women to practise and excel in sports. The number of female participants in major international games is ample proof. The *Commission Nationale des Sports Féminins* organises a series of activities over the year to promote sports among women. The Commission obtains its total funding from my Ministry.

Moreover, all our sports complex and youth centres, which provide sports facilities, are equally made available to all women who either want to practise a sport as a professional or for keep fit purposes.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 430, the Minister speaks of lack of public interest as one of the major challenges. Will he, for the next financial year, liaise with the Ministry of Health to have a survey as to practice of sports within the Mauritian population on a gender basis looking at women and men?

Mr Barbier: On page 437, item *31113006 - Construction of Sports Infrastructure - (a) Reconstruction of St. François Xavier Stadium*. There is a provision of Rs15 m. for this current year and one of Rs25 m. for the coming year. May I know from the Minister whether this sum of Rs15 m. has already been used and whether the St. François Xavier Stadium is under the aegis of his Ministry or that of the Municipality of Port Louis?

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item, I see there is a list of Sports Complex and it is written '(f) Others'. The same applies for *Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure* under item *31113406* then there is (c) *Others*. Can we have a list of these 'Others' and how much is allocated to each of these 'Others'?

Mr Ritoo: Regarding the St. François Xavier Stadium, the reconstruction is done by the Ministry. The contract has been awarded to Tianli Construction Co. Ltd. The project value is Rs69,879,000 and the work is actually in progress.

The Chairperson: Does the work falls under your Ministry?

Mr Ritoo: The construction is done by my Ministry but, maybe, afterwards we will give the responsibility of running the stadium to the Municipality.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: What about the 'Others'?

Mr Ritoo: The other constructions are: Tranquebar, Germain de Comarmond Stadium, Rohit Boolaky Stadium, Bon Accueil Sports Complex, Baie du Tombeau Sports Complex, Morcellement St. André, Arsenal football ground.

Mr Quirin: J'ai une dernière question, à la page 437, sous l'item *31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*. Je sais que le ministre a récemment fait allusion à *two swimming pools* à Rivière des Anguilles et Flacq et d'un vélodrome à Roches Brunes. Je suis assez surpris de

ne les pas voir dans cette liste. Le ministre pourrait-il nous dire si effectivement ces complexes ont déjà été identifiés, pourquoi ils ne figurent pas sur cette liste de *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 436, mention is made of *Football Clubs*: Rs16 m. What is this item? This amount of Rs16 m. is for what?

Mr Ritoo: The regional grant.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under item 26210139, we contribute to the *World Anti-Doping Agency* (WADA). Do we have a local Anti-Doping Agency or Unit at your Ministry? Is there any sensitisation campaign done so that Mauritius does not have a case like the *Tour de France* case?

Mr Ritoo: I am proud to say that, as at date, we do not have any athletes having a drug problem or anything. We have an Anti-Doping Unit at the Sports Medical Unit of my Ministry. Mr Pravind Doomun is heading together with the Director of Sports. Regarding the *vélo*drome, as I said, *la cerise sur le gateau c'est le* Lotto Fund. My Ministry identified 10 acres of land at Roches Brunes for the construction of the *vélo*drome. The land has already been put at the disposal of the Ministry. The project needs to be worked out and it will be taken on board in 2011. Regarding the swimming pool, it will be from the Lotto Fund.

Programme Code 682 – Promotion and Development of Sports (Rs309,835,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 683 – Youth Services was called.

Mr Quirin: At page 430, under *Programme 683: Youth Service*, mention is made of a *Reorientation of the Youth Service* and a *complete paradigm shift of the role of the National Youth Council*. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire comment il va procéder ?

Mr Ritoo: Actually, we have a panoply of programmes in all our youth centres and we have got the National Youth Council which defines the needs of the youth in this country. At the level of the Ministry, we have a Youth Council which is responsible for the updating and organisation of all activities in our youth centres.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, à la même page, il est mentionné *lack of public interest remains a major constraint; efforts are still being undertaken by the Ministry with all stakeholders*. Donc, je voudrais justement lui dire que rien n'est *earmarked* en ce qui concerne *advertising, marketing of activities* dans les *estimates*. Je ne vois pas comment on pourrait surmonter ce *lack of awareness* s'il n'y pas de publicité, si un bon marketing n'est pas fait ?

Mr Ritoo: I think the hon. Member is coming next Tuesday with a question regarding this issue. Maybe, I will deal separately on that issue. Anyway, we have actually a one-stop shop. An office has been located at the *rez-de-chaussée* of Emmanuel Anquetil Building. It will serve to provide information pertaining to youth matters like activities of youth centres, publication on youth issues and also for giving counselling to young people as and when required. This office will also be responsible for all research, documentation and statistical information on youth issues and development and will also market the activities of the Ministry.

Regarding arousing public interest in youth and sports activities, we have renewed our youth programme and new measures will be introduced, as I just stated, to arouse public interest in the activities of the Ministry and to motivate them to either undertake youth-related actions or indulge in sporting gatherings. This concerns the old, the young and the women as well. For example, the various competitions organised at grassroot and school levels like the *jeux de l'avenir, jeux de l'espoir et jeux inter-collèges*, the setting up of one stop-shop, which I have just spoken about, will showcase youth in action and the installation of fitness equipment in our youth centres. These are only a few measures to arouse public interest.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, under item 31112407 - *Upgrading of Youth Centres*, at page 438, mention is made of Mahebourg, Bambous, Helvetia and others. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has had time to visit Cité Barkly Youth Centre, *qui était le fleuron du ministère à un certain moment*, and Mont Roches Youth Centre. Can I ask him whether provisions have been made to upgrade these two youth centres? According to my information, especially at Mont Roches, there are either no officers or perhaps a skeleton staff. Can I appeal to the hon. Minister, at least, to see to it urgently because we are having drug problems there? That case of Cité Barkly is very urgent to take care of and if provisions could be made not only to renew the equipment but to put efficient and reliable officers so that this region, which is a most deprived one, *une région à risques* can have its share of the national budget.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I take the hon. Minister to page 430, item 3 - *Main Constraints and Challenges - A Trust will be set up for fund raising*. May we know from the hon. Minister what will be the objectives of the Trust Fund, who will be the beneficiaries of this fund raised and what incentives are we giving to those who want to contribute to that Trust Fund as we know there is a lack of fund for sports activities in Mauritius? Will they be given certain tax facilities or tax rebates so that they can deduct it from their tax bill?

The Chairperson: If I am not mistaken, this was subject of an issue.

Mr Ritoo: I talked lengthily on this issue in my Budget speech regarding the Club Maurice Committee where we are putting up a Trust Fund and request has been made to the Ministry of Finance regarding the objectives and all the facilities.

Regarding the question raised by hon. Bhagwan regarding ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: I can't limit myself to what the hon. Minister said in his speech. I can go a bit deeper. What are we targeting for - Rs1 m., Rs2 m. or Rs400 m.? What activities will be given to the beneficiaries: football, volleyball, basketball, hockey or cricket?

Mr Ritoo: I think, I will have to go through it maybe it will help the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Ritoo: The Club Maurice Committee was set up two years ago to provide better technological and psychological support to athletes participating in major games. One of its objectives is to look for additional funds for better preparation of athletes. The Club Maurice Committee, which has been actively involved in Francophone Games, CJSOI and Commonwealth Games, is envisaging to set up a trust in order to attract sponsorship money to provide better financial assistance and incentives to athletes participating in major international games. The beneficiaries have not yet been finalised.

(Interruptions)

I just want to inform hon. Bhagwan that the Mont Roches Youth Centre is, in fact, actually being upgraded; paintings and tiling are being done.

(Interruptions)

Barkly Youth Centre will be taken into account. We will first visit Barkly Youth Centre and see what are the works that have to be done.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 438, item 31112007- (b) *Harris Street Youth Centre*, I take note that there is absolutely no provision being made for that centre. Do I take it from the hon. Minister that he does not intend to go ahead with it?

Mr Ritoo: We will proceed at a later stage. Regarding the question of hon. Bhagwan about the officers, in fact, my Ministry, through the PSC, will be recruiting five youth officers.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 433, *Programme 683: Youth Services - P2 – Number of young people enrolled in National Youth Achievement Award*, I find 5,000 for this current year and it goes on increasing. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give the

figures of those who completed this programme because enrolment is one thing? Let's say out of these 5,000, how many have reached the silver or gold medal?

Secondly, Mr Chairperson, at page 439, item 26313068 – *Current Grant - National Youth Council*, the grant remains the same for 2010 and 2011. If we are expecting activities to increase, is the National Youth Council having funds elsewhere because otherwise I can't see how they can increase the activities.

The Chairperson: I don't think the hon. Minister can digest so many questions at the same time.

Mr Ritoo: I think hon. Uteem raised the question about Harris Street Youth Centre. I have got the information. In fact, the work is under progress.

Regarding the question raised by hon. Mrs Labelle, those who have completed the programme, join the Gold Award Holders Association. I can give the hon. Member a list of all those who have completed the silver and the bronze.

Mr Quirin: Page 437, item 22090 - *Security*, je vois qu'il y a une hausse considérable. Le ministre va sûrement me dire qu'il a changé de compagnie de sécurité, mais malgré tout, c'est pratiquement deux fois ce qui avait été budgété en 2010. J'aimerai savoir quelle est la compagnie qui assure la sécurité. Est-ce une compagnie ou plusieurs? Concernant le code 22060 – *Maintenance*, je vois qu'il y a une somme de R 3 millions - c'est pour l'entretien de quoi exactement. Puis, il y a l'item 22030 – *Rent* : R 2.7 millions, la somme allouée au *Maintenance* est plus forte que celle du *Rent*. Je ne sais pas si c'est par rapport à la location du bâtiment que l'entretien est fait.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, at page 442, under item 232653 – *Youth Officer*, we are asked to vote for 5 more youth officers for the coming financial year. Can we know to which centres these youth officers are going to be attached?

Mr Ritoo: The youth officers will be recruited by my Ministry and then they will be put at the disposal of specific youth centres where we lack staff.

Regarding the National Youth Council, further request for more grants will be considered, Mr Chairperson.

For the security, this is strictly according to the tender. It is a new security company.

The Chairperson: Which one is it?

Mr Ritoo: It is the Rapid Security Services Limited

The Chairperson: As regards the maintenance?

Mr Ritoo: The maintenance is for all our equipment at the Ministry, even the maintenance of stadiums and sporting equipment everywhere.

The Chairperson: A very last question from hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, at page 437, regarding the last item 22900 – *Other goods and services*, an amount of Rs3.5 m. has been earmarked. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can give us some more details on this?

Mr Ritoo: For *Other Goods and Services*, the increase is mainly due to upward trend of activities mainly sensitisation campaigns.

The Chairperson: There is no increase. It is for item 22900 and the amount is Rs3,555,000. There is a slight decrease. The hon. Member wanted to have details.

Mr Ritoo: I can submit the details.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The details are going to be circulated.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 438, 31112407 - *Upgrading of Youth Centres- d) Others*, we have nothing budgeted for this year. Is all hope lost for a youth centre in Curepipe? There was one million rupees last year and nothing this year.

Mr Ritoo: It all depends upon the requirements of the youth there. We can consider.

Programme Code 683: Youth Services (Rs66, 959,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 12.51p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 1.57 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 449, *Programme 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs* - I would like to know how the major services referred to on page 445, in other words, “Amending legislations” and all this will suggest that there is a dimension of policy formulation, research, evaluation studies and, yet, under the indicators and targets, I find nothing to reflect the intellectual dimension of running such a crucial Ministry as that of social security. Has the hon. Minister considered that point and will she undertake to review the indicators, so that we have indicators relating to ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order please!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...policy formulation in respect of the future of our social security system and evaluation studies of what exists?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Member will appreciate that this is a matter of policy and it is for Government to decide which type of policy to take up. In fact, as far as intellectual reflection is concerned, this is being constantly done at my Ministry's level.

Mr Obeegadoo: I beg to the Minister. The policy issues are for Government that is clear. The Opposition cannot dictate policy as to Government, but we are here to vote the public funds. I am saying that when we vote these public funds ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, please put up your question!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am reformulating my question, Mr Chairperson, because the hon. Minister did not understand. No offence meant. I am reformulating. I am saying that we need to evaluate what is being done so that we can efficiently spend the money for the next fiscal year. In terms of standards and targets, will the Minister consider including the issue of studies to evaluate what is presently done?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This will be done.

The Chairperson: That's better.

Mr Ganoo: Page 445 – 2. *Major Services to be provided for 2001 to 2003, Programme 501 – Policy and Management for Social Affairs*, this is the first major policy of this Ministry: *Improving Management Information System to raise productivity and reduce malpractices*. I think the finger has been put on the right problem, the major problem facing this Ministry, years and years, Mr Chairperson has been this question of malpractices. I don't want to waste the time of the Committee, but we know how overpayment has been done in this Ministry not complying with the *National Pension Act*, basic rule and financial regulations have not been adhered to, data not verified, the result has been the overpayment of basic pension to be recovered amounted to some Rs46 m. I am not having a go at the Minister herself, this has been going on for years, but I think it is the right occasion to underline this major problem, overpayments arose because of death, prolonged absence and so on.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, please, you've made your point!

Mr Ganoo: The point I wish to make is that, in some cases, Rs500 m. are not accounted for; Rs13 m. of social aid immediate cash payment have not been recovered. In this age of technological advance as the Ministry, itself, says: *Improving Management Information System to raise productivity and malpractices*, what is the guarantee; what is the in-built mechanism? All these have been commented upon by the Director of Audit.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I think the hon. Member is right; the Ministry is taking the right measures to enhance the Management Information System so as to make sure that

we get a true picture of the situation. A survey has been carried out to find out about all the existing beneficiaries; a software data capture has already been developed and officers have been trained. Now, we also have a consultant, funded by UNDP, who is working on that issue.

Mr Bhagwan: I am coming back to this question of malpractices. Can the Minister give us an idea in terms of funds which have been forgone by Government, either overpaid or otherwise? Secondly, when the Minister talks about – on *Programme 501*, on page 445, *Amending legislations to bring them in line with the requirements of a modern society*, can we have an idea which legislation? Thirdly, *Managing quality and coverage of social benefits*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is provided in the coming budget to have a sort of catalogue of all the benefits? I know that there are several benefits according to old people of social aid and so on. Is it not high time to have all the information under one sort of catalogue so that anybody can know what benefit is available to different types of people who deserve it?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, this is being done, and we are envisaging a vulgarisation of information using TV, radio and so on and we will look into having a sort of a catalogue to be given.

The Chairperson: There are two more issues - the amount through malpractices!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as the money that has not been retrieved due to overpayment is concerned, we are working on it. In fact, it is true that there is a certain amount. The amount has been mentioned in the audit report, but we are working on it and we are trying to retrieve as much as possible.

The Chairperson: The other issue is about legislation.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The legislation will come afterwards on the Social Aid Act; we are still working on reviewing the whole procedure. Our main objective is to move away from the handout and giving down to people to the hand up system. This is what we are trying to do. We are talking about empowerment so we are still looking into the matter and trying to see which formula will be best adapted for our system.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees* at page 452, may I know from the hon. Minister how many advisers are attached to her Office. Can we have their names, their qualifications and their remuneration please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This will be compiled and will be circulated.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Chairperson. I am on page 445, regarding the *Major Achievements for 2010 - Training programme on care for the elderly for a first batch of 50 trainees*, have all the trainees completed this training and which training was it?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the training is ongoing; we had enrolled 50 persons out of which four have dropped out. The training is still on; it is presently being carried out. It is training for the care of elderly and severely disabled persons.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the Minister whether there was another batch which has finished the course in May or they had an exam?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This does not concern my Ministry; it is not a batch from my Ministry.

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may take the Minister back to page 445, linking this *Programme - Major Achievements for 2010*, may I know what exactly is the - *First phase of the Social Register of Mauritius Project (SRM) completed*? We are told that the first phase has been completed. Where in the budget is the second phase envisaged?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the first phase refers to the Register, a survey has been carried out on existing beneficiaries and we have also managed to train our officers. A consultant is working on the criteria for reviewing the whole social aid system. As I have mentioned, surveys have been carried out. We have the development of software with regard to the Registry which has been completed. Testing is ongoing by a Social Security Officer as regards the Register and the statistics are worked out for policy formulation. Still, we are waiting for the last report from Professor Muller, our UNDP consultant.

Mr Obeegadoo: I apologise for my ignorance, what exactly is this register, what are we registering?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Social Register of Mauritius caters for all types of beneficiaries, that is, all types of social aid that is provided to the community and all those that fall under the group. There are different types of aids and social benefits and this has been regrouped under one register which we call the Social Register of Mauritius.

Mrs Labelle: Page 451, *Programme 501, item 22120007 - Fees for Training*, may we know from the hon. Minister of which training we are talking about; the training is for whom and who are the trainers?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The item – *Fees for Training* refers to the provision for payment to the University of Mauritius in respect of seven officers of Social Security Cadre following Diploma and Degree Courses in Social Work sponsored by the Ministry and also

the National Computer Board for Officers following IC3 courses, resource persons also conducting induction and in-house training courses.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask some questions about item 27 - *Social Benefits*. Under item 27210002 - *Social Aid/Social Register Benefits*, the amount is Rs567,600,000, can I know what are the requirements for one to have these benefits? May I ask the same question regarding item 27210003 - *Unemployment Hardship Relief*? What is the difference?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, I am wondering whether this is not provided for either by legislation or regulation.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Please tell us which page and which item number?

The Chairperson: No, we have not yet reached there. We are still on Programme 501!

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 445, *Strategic Note, 1. Major Achievements for 2010 - Launching of Best Practice Guide on Integrity Building of NGOs*. Would the hon. Minister kindly illuminate my meninges as to whether there is some legislation concerning this?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, we are working on the National NGO Policy Paper, and this is being done in collaboration with NGOs.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is there some legislation attached to it or would it just be a code which will not be respected at any time?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Legislation is already being worked upon.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 445, *Strategic Note, 1. Major Achievements for 2010 - First phase of the Social Register of Mauritius Project (SRM) completed*. In the past, the integrity of the database system of the Ministry had been put into doubt and this is what resulted in all these overpayments and malpractices. This Ministry is *tributaire* of what the Civil Status Division does, for example, in case of death and so on, emails are sent, I understand, to inform the Ministry to update the database. In this case of the Social Register of Mauritius, which is now, apparently from the answer given, a complete compilation of all the beneficiaries, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what guarantees we have, what mechanisms have been built so that the Social Register of Mauritius is really up to date, and is not the cause of other malpractices?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, let me underline that it is not, in fact, the integrity of the Register which was put in question. What has happened in the past is that sometimes there were delays in the submission of information about persons who have passed away, or persons who have left the country. So, for that purpose, I have just

mentioned that we have upgraded our Information System. In fact, we have an existing system which is a mixture, right now, of electronic and manual processing. The updating once done, all 42 or so local offices will be connected, linked to an electronic network, and the main benefit of this will be that they will be linked to the main office in Rose Hill. The applications submitted in hard copy can be scanned and forwarded to the main office in real time for immediate processing, and the whole process, until payment, will be fully electronic. This should be completed within a period of weeks. So, this problem will be solved.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 445. We are told that *50% of the second phase of the Mauritian Sign Language Programme* has been completed. May we have some information from the hon. Minister regarding this Mauritian Sign Language? What about the first phase? Is it being used, and where?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The first phase has already been completed, that is, the sign language is utilised on TV during major events. We have had a publication of the sign language. It is being used in all schools, and we are trying to see whether all the officers of the Disability Unit at the Ministry should learn the sign language. Furthermore, we are training parents and teachers as well, so that they can help people requiring the sign language. You will note that the weekly news bulletin is also using the sign language. About the second phase, we are training interpreters, and we are working on the second volume of the sign language dictionary. You will also note that the sign language is being used in cyclone bulletins as well.

The Chairperson: Time is over! I am sorry!

Programme Code 501 - Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs74,970,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 502 - Social Protection (Rs1,104,598,000) was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 449; *O3 Registration and training of NSAs - P1: Number of NSAs registered and trained.* May I know from the hon. Minister whether the NSAs are NGOs or individuals, and also if she can give us the list of NGOs?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Non State Actors involve NGOs and also different schools working with handicapped people and all. So, it takes up a whole set of people working together. We have the MACOSS also forming part of it.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I am at page 452. *Programme 502, item 27210005 - Assistance to Fishermen.* I see the footnote that the figures are consolidated under one item. Can the hon. Minister tell us how much, in terms of assistance - I suppose this is a bad weather allowance - has been spent for the year 2010?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants a breakdown!

Mr Ganoo: Yes, a breakdown. I would also like to know what is provided for next year.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as allowance to fishermen is concerned, as the hon. Member rightly stated, it is bad weather and closed season. We have about 2,195 beneficiaries, and the total amount spent was approximately Rs61 m. The payment is done through the Ministry of Fisheries. We only provide the funds.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 452, Mr Chairperson, item 28211004 - *Other Current Transfers - Charitable Institutions*, a sum of Rs60 m is earmarked. Can we be provided with details and what are these charitable institutions? With regard to item 28211024 - *Other Current Transfers - Subsidy to Religious Bodies*, there is a sum of Rs4.56 m. earmarked. Can we have a list of these religious bodies, and what are the criteria? Very often, we do not know the criteria on which these religious bodies are given money.

On page 453, I see again item 26313024 - *Current Grant - Ilois Welfare Fund*. There was a promise from the hon. Prime Minister to change the appellation of the Ilois Welfare Fund. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware, and whether a name has been chosen. With regard to the Rs4 m. given, what was the request of the Ilois community, and how much has been given?

Dr. S. Boolell: Concerning the grant to the charitable institutions, there seems to be money being earmarked for the NGO Trust Fund - the NGO Trust Fund, as a recipiendiary of Government help - and there is also money going to individual associations. I would like the views of the hon. Minister on the whys and wherefores of the existence of the NGO Trust Fund if her Ministry is directly giving money to some institutions.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will come back to this part afterwards, because it is not really linked to that. The first thing, I will circulate the list of charitable institutions or if the hon. Member wants it, I can read out the list.

The Chairperson: Religious bodies!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I need to emphasise that the current transfers to religious bodies is meant for the payment of water rates. In fact, the payment used to be effected by the Ministry of Energy, but it has recently been transferred to my Ministry. The number of religious bodies is 1,255, and the average monthly rate is around Rs380,000 and this is made on the basis of the claims from the CWA.

The Chairperson: There are no criteria then?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, it is not determined by us.

The Chairperson: What about the question on the Ilois Welfare Fund?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Obviously it is meant for activities at the Ilois Welfare Fund, and we have already decided to alter the name. Instead of Ilois Welfare Fund, it will henceforth be known as the Chagossian Welfare Fund.

The Chairperson: About the question of Rs4 m.?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: They have made a request in view of reviewing the funds allocated to them because of the numerous activities that are carried out, and all these activities will depend on the programmes that they submit to the Ministry.

Mrs Labelle: I refer to page 450, on *Sub-Programme 50203, P01: Protection of the elderly against abuse*. We are given a percentage of reported cases dealt with. May we have the number of cases received? What do we understand that an abuse case toward an elderly has been dealt within one month? What has been done regarding this dealing with?

Under the same programme, with regard to *O3: Medical Support to the elderly, P1: Number of psychological rehabilitation sessions for elderly*. I would like to know how this is being carried on. Is it a one-to-one counselling or a group therapy? What is being done regarding this?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The number of reported cases of abuse between January to October 2010 is 628. As to how these cases are dealt with, we have the Elderly Watch Committees in various regions and they proceed in three phases. They start by meeting the people and counselling the individuals concerned. When we say that the cases have been dealt with, it means that they have been figured out and they have worked out solutions for the persons. So, protection has been provided to the elderly.

The Chairperson: About the *psychological rehabilitation*?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Could the hon. Member let me know again which information she requested about mental rehabilitation?

Mrs Labelle: It was about psychological rehabilitation sessions for elderly. There is a figure of 50 being mentioned for 2010 and 60 for 2011. May we know what is meant by these psychological rehabilitation sessions? If it is a session of 50, where is it? Is it done individually or in a group?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The sessions are carried out at the charitable institutions. In fact, there are ten charitable institutions which have benefited from these sessions. They are group sessions and it is meant for people who have lost their faculties. Some of them cannot even dress up, comb their hair, etc. The Medical Unit of my Ministry goes there and works out this rehabilitation of the elderly.

Mr Bhagwan: I have two questions, at page 453, Mr Chairperson, under item 26313056 – *Current Grant - National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons*. I see that Rs1.9 m. is voted. May we know from the hon. Minister what is the composition of the Board? How many disabled persons - if you can have a progress chart - have been employed on the recommendation of the Council and how many have been accepted by the private sector?

At page 454, on *Sub-Programme 50203: Protection and Well Being of the Elderly*, may we have an indication from the hon. Minister as to the number of centenaries to date and who is the eldest one? I want to know from the Minister - although it is policy - we are being asked to vote sums budgeted for the elderly concerning even your Constituency.

The Chairperson: Yes, please!

Mr Bhagwan: There was no question of opposition or government, every time we were being invited in the past. The Ministry was sending us a letter just to attend the ceremony of centenarians, but we have been made to understand that since the general election there is a new policy for Members of the Opposition not to be invited – we are boycotted. Recently, my colleagues were not invited in Chemin Grenier. Is it a new Orange policy contrary to the Red policy...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please, you made your point!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We will carry on; the hon. Member gives me a list of ten questions. Has he finished with the first one?

Mr Bhagwan: No, but we can't make politics on our.....

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please, you made your point! Hon. Jhugroo, please!

(Interruptions)

Order please! We start with the first question with regard to members of the National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will circulate the list of the Board members.

The Chairperson: Does the hon. Minister have the figures concerning the number of disabled persons who have been employed?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, I am glad to mention that, for this year, we have managed to employ 105 persons. From the beginning of the year, you will note that we had already some 50 persons who were employed but, right now, we carried out a survey. Out of the 150 persons who came to us and were trained - last week we had *l'Espace Rencontre*, 40

have been given solid commitment of getting recruited in the days to come. So, we have 40 plus the original 65 which makes 105.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether she has cases where the private sector has refused to employ? This is what we want to know.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the Ministry is working on it. We have a list of private sector companies who were invited and I must say that a large number did attend. For those who have not attended, a follow-up is being carried out. We are informing them that, as from January next year, we are coming up with regulations and we intend to enforce them.

The Chairperson: The oldest centenarian?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as the centenarians are concerned, let me inform the House that we have 86 centenarians; 76 of them are women, 9 males and one in Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: The oldest is who?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as the invitations are concerned, we now leave it to the family to invite because we don't feel that we should go there.

(Interruptions)

We don't invite. We attend!

The Chairperson: Order, please! Hon. Mrs Labelle do you have any question? Hon. Bhagwan, please! Time is running out!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, we are not here to discuss policy; but we realise there is a change in policy regarding invitations, so the hon. Minister has changed the policy, it's okay.

I am on page 453, item 26313093 - *Current Grant: Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of trainers attached to this Board and also their qualifications? Will the hon. Minister confirm that we have sometimes drivers and other persons who are ensuring programmes? If we have particular programmes, what is the length and who are those who are providing these programmes. Could she give the names of the Chairperson and members of the Board?

The Chairperson: There are five questions in this question: number of trainers, their qualifications, who are the other persons, the length of the training. Please be brief!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, as far as the Board is concerned, I will circulate the list of members to the Board. With regard to trainers, training is carried out in the following fields: agriculture...

The Chairperson: No, the question was not about the fields, but number of trainers, qualifications...

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I have to say which field to determine which trainers go to which sector.

The Chairperson: Okay I have no control on your answer.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The trainers come from MITD and the ongoing training is carried out by officers from SMEDA, MITD and sometimes NIF as well.

The Chairperson: The length of the training?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It all depends on the type of training - jewellery...

Mrs Labelle: What about the duration of the programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It depends; some of them are over three months, some are over one year depending on the disability of the persons concerned.

Mrs Labelle: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there are no trainers employed by the Board?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We do have a few.

Mrs Labelle: Those persons for whom I would like to have the qualifications, if at all possible.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Member needs the qualifications of the trainers.

Mrs Labelle: Yes.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will circulate it.

Mrs Labelle: How many are there?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: There are two of them.

The Chairperson: I allow two last questions. Hon. Obeegadoo! Be brief please! I am just telling the hon. Member, time is over!

Mr Obeegadoo: Of course, Mr Chairperson. At page 454, item 22120 - *Fees*, the budget being proposed for fees has more than doubled or has doubled from Rs20,7 m. to Rs41,2 m. Apparently, this is for fees of Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits. May we know what justifies the doubling of the budget here?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, let me say that.....

The Chairperson: No, please sorry! I allow two last questions. Let hon. Ganoo put his question because we are running out of time.

Mr Ganoo: At page 453, item 27220002 - *Assistance to Parents of Disabled Children*.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is another issue, Mr Chairperson. Let me tackle one by one.

The Chairperson: Okay!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as domiciliary visits are concerned, I would like to say that we have two categories of people who benefit from this. The above 90 – all individuals above 90 years of age get domiciliary visit, but then we have those 75⁺ who are bedridden and whose requests for domiciliary visits come throughout the year. We've spent more than the Rs20 m. and this year with the budget, we are also going to have domiciliary visits for physically handicapped children. That explains why the value has increased.

Mr Ganoo: I have already indicated the item.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Repeat it please!

Mr Ganoo: At page 453, item 27220002 - *Assistance to Parents of Disabled Children* - can I ask the hon. Minister - the sum budgeted for next year is Rs850,000 – how many parents have benefited from this assistance? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in this item, the parents, who accompany their children who have to undergo operations abroad, are included and, if such is the case, can I make an appeal to the hon. Minister because there are many cases where the parents, who accompany their children outside, discover that the assistance given to them is not sufficient so sometimes they have to live in very, very difficult situations abroad?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, when we talk about assistance to parents and disabled children, it is mainly to groups of parents because we are talking about respite care. The parents are taken out and are given some respite by keeping the children for a weekend or so or taking them out. As far as the transport of parents is concerned while going for surgical operations abroad, this particular item is taken care of at the Ministry of Health.

The Chairperson: Sorry, I am out of time by four minutes. I am sorry, hon. Mrs Labelle.

Programme Code 502 – Social Protection (Rs 1,104,598,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I urge the hon. Members and also the hon. Ministers to be as brief as possible so that we can attend to as many queries as possible. It all depends upon you. If you want to take issues, the question is long, the answer is much longer, therefore we are all stuck.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, we have a Sub-Programme we have not touched; maybe we can take it out of the fifteen minutes of the next Programme, if it is possible.

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, it has been voted. We all know the rule of the game, unfortunately. I am just trying to help as far as possible. Members know our time constraint and what has been done. We move to Programme Code 503.

Programme Code 503 – National Pension Management was called.

Mrs Labelle: Under *Programme 503: 22120001 - Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may we know from the hon. Minister the number of doctors who are working under this programme; could she give us a list of these doctors and the fees paid to them for 2010?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: As far as the doctors are concerned, there are 50 medical practitioners. We have got 28 specialists from the public sector and 13 from the private sector. The fees paid for domiciliary visit is Rs500 per visit for the Board; it is Rs900 for the medical practitioner, and for the specialist it is Rs1260.

Mrs Labelle: Can the hon. Minister circulate the list of doctors and how much fees were paid to each doctor respectively?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Certainly.

Mrs Labelle: I am on the same page. Regarding item *22120004 - Fees to Mauritius Post Ltd*, it is from Rs15 m. to Rs17 m. There is an increase. May we know from the Minister for which purpose are these fees being paid to the Mauritius Posts Limited?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, for beneficiaries who get their pension from the post, for each transaction Rs14 is paid to the Mauritius Posts Limited and we have about 96,000 beneficiaries who get their pension through the posts. We also have a one-off payment for the change of their pension cards; again it is Rs14 per transaction.

Mrs Labelle: Is it for the BRP – Basic Retirement Pension? If we have 96,000 beneficiaries and we are paying Rs17 m., I think there are additional fees. May we know what are the additional fees included here?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In terms of new beneficiaries for next year, every year the number of people attaining 60 increases.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 456, item *27 Social Benefits*, the Minister earlier referred to re-thinking. Will she tell us whether, within the sums budgeted here, there is provision for a

revision of conditions of eligibility for these benefits, for instance, to address the gender bias on the issue of head of household.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is being taken care of when dealing with the SRM. While talking about the Social Register of Mauritius, the consultant has been asked to look into it and, in fact, we are now talking about partner or the spouse.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, regarding the conditions of eligibility concerning disabled children - as the Minister well knows as from age 14 there is a major issue. Is this being revisited in the course of the next year?

The Chairperson: On the same issue, hon. Dr. Boolell has got a question.

Dr. Boolell: Concerning the Basic Invalid Pension, does it rely solely on age or on disability?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Basic Invalid Pension is based on the condition of the patient, but we do agree that there is one element of age as from the age of 15, because, in fact, the invalidity pension is given to those who cannot engage into employment and where children are concerned, this is not given, but in the place of the invalidity pension, there is another form of support and allowance given to the parent.

Dr. Boolell: Surely a child of thirteen is almost a young adult and needs this kind of pension to be increased rather than just rely on this aid. I don't want an answer, but I'll just wish that the Minister looks into it.

The Chairperson: This is a question of policy, of course, and the hon. Member raised the issue. Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I'll just come back on this question of Basic Invalidity Pension. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether a formula has been found in order to allow for more applicants, for more claimants to benefit from this Basic Invalidity Pension (BIP) because we know there is this threshold of the 60% incapacity which is very high and sometimes people cannot work but medically they do not satisfy these criteria?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has made his point.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Chairperson, we are aware that there is a major problem, but we have budgetary constraints. In any case, apart from the invalidity pension, when people do not become eligible for it, we do provide another form of assistance on humanitarian ground.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, just quickly, I think I have heard the hon. Minister say that the BIP is for those who are not engaged in employment.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No.

Mr Barbier: On page 456 under item 27210102 - *Basic Widows Pension*, I would like to know whether we are still paying this pension only to widows and why not to widowers.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This matter is being taken care of.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mrs Labelle: On this item of *Basic Widows Pension*, Mr Chairperson, there was the case of a woman who was not entitled to this widows' pension because of religious marriage and so on. This case has been pending for years and I don't know whether the hon. Minister has been able to look into that.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, this matter has to be dealt with at the level of the Civil Status Office, not at the level of the Ministry of Social Security.

Programme Code 503: National Pension Management (Rs9,415,816,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 504 – Probation and Social Rehabilitation was called.

Mrs Labelle: I am referring to page 450 *Sub-Programme 50401 – Probation and After Care Services – 01: Supervision and rehabilitation of offenders. P1: Percentage of cases dealt with successfully.* Can I know what is meant by 'rehabilitated successfully' and on what criteria we reach to this conclusion that they have been rehabilitated successfully and we have an 83% success?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Chairperson, we have a number of probationers who are brought to us in our Probation Home. In fact, it is considered to be successful when they do not come back to us and this is how we determine it.

(Interruptions)

These offenders are brought to us. They spend the time in our institutions with us and if ever '*ils récidivent*', they come back to us, but I do agree that there is a problem because after the age of 18, they are no longer sent back to us.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at pages 460 and 461, under *Sub-Programme 50402: Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders*, the number of staff has remained the same. It is 52 all throughout. The number of officers in that section has remained constant and we know that there is a lack of probation officers, especially now that we have the introduction of the Community Service Order. Can I ask the hon. Minister how does she explain this contradiction, when, in fact, we need more. There are more services being offered by this office apparently, but the number of staff has remained the same.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the recruitment is on, there are interviews going on at the PSC right now.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, on page 456 item 28211049 - *Other Current Transfers: Probation Home for Girls* and item 28211050 *Other Current Transfers – Probation Home for Boys*, may I know from the hon. Minister what population we are talking about, how many boys and how many girls there are in the probation homes?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In the case of the girls we have four and in the case of the boys five.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Ganoo: Sir, at page 446, under *Programme 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation - Reduce the rate of suicide*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the NGO which caters for people with suicidal tendencies, the Befrienders, receive any assistance or help from the Ministry? Is there still a Suicide Prevention Unit at her Ministry and how is it manned?

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue, I refer the hon. Minister to page 450, *Sub-Programme 50401: Probation And After Care Services - 02: Support to people with suicidal tendencies*. It is said 60%. May we know whether there is a database and, if so, how many officers are there in that Unit with regard to people with suicidal tendencies?

Mrs Labelle: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson. We are told that for *Support to people with suicidal tendencies*, the performance indicator is *number of sensitisation campaigns*. The support to suicidal tendencies is the number of sensitisation campaigns. I would have thought we have identified these persons and now we are talking about 60 sensitisation campaigns.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has made her point.

Mrs Labelle: Where are these campaigns held?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: First of all, Mr Chairperson, as far as Befrienders is concerned, the Ministry does not allocate funds to NGOs directly but it is done through the NGO Trust Fund. Befrienders has obtained Rs50,000 from the NGO Trust Fund.

As far as the Suicide Prevention Unit is concerned, we do have one at the Ministry. It is manned by Probation Officers and Principal Probation Officers as well.

(Interruptions)

We carry out 24/7 on phone and we also have an interactive website. As far as the campaign is concerned...

The Chairperson: No, the database first.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, as far as suicide is concerned, we receive calls of suicidal persons, persons showing the tendency and we try to cater for their needs. We do not have a database as such. What we can give is the number of cases per year, but on top of that, the Member mentioned about campaigns. Obviously, we carry out campaigns in the schools, in the community centres and in the day care centres. We have a whole unit of gatekeepers composed of people in different regions as well as senior citizens and we were working out campaigns in different areas. Now, as far as the persons are concerned, these are the people who phone to us or who contact us on our website. We have got a website at the Ministry.

Dr. S. Boolell: From the answer given by the hon. Minister, I would like her to confirm whether the suicide hotline is 24/7, 24 hours.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Yes, on the phone.

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the hon. Minister talk about the action that is taken afterwards! Is it just support, advice or counter-advice?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We can only at this stage provide counselling, talk to them and sometimes the officers go and meet these people and their relatives. This is also done, but we cannot do more than that.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, must I take it that the support to people with suicidal tendencies is measured by the number of sensitisation campaigns? This is my first question. My second question is: regarding the 24/7 service which is offered on phone, who are those persons ensuring this service and what are the qualifications of these persons?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We have Probation Officers who follow courses at the University of Mauritius - BSc holders; we also have a number of psychologists working with us on sessional basis plus a Principal Probation Officer who is a psychologist as well.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 450, under item *Performance Indicator 01- Supervision and rehabilitation of offenders*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether this includes people who have been convicted? Is there a supervision of these convicts after they have been released from prisons or detention centres?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, we do not cater for prisoners, Mr Chairperson. We deal with children who are the probationers and this is what we have in our institutions. However, the Probation Officers also deal with convicts outside, not within the precinct of our institutions.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on Sub-Programme 50402: *Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders*. Here, the success rate for the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders is 90%. I am happy to learn that. I would like to know the number of juvenile offenders who have been rehabilitated and also the criteria on which we have based ourselves to say that they have been rehabilitated. Is it for the current year? Let's say we have 100 juvenile offenders for the year 2010 and by the end of the year, we are saying it is 90% who have been rehabilitated. I want to know more about this.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I do agree with the hon. Member on that because I had the same question: how can we find out whether we have really rehabilitated them? The only way for us to answer to this is when these people are not sent back to us.

(Interruptions)

It is not over one year. Some of them come to us after two years or more. Even then, our Probation Officers are supposed to follow them in their homes, in their areas. As long as they do not get back into the net of the Police, we feel that they have been, to a certain extent, rehabilitated although I do agree with the hon. Member that this is not what we really aim at achieving.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, *Sub-Programme 50401: Probation and After Care Services*, I am sorry to take the hon. Minister back to the sensitisation campaigns for those with suicidal tendencies. We have the number of campaigns. Given that we know that the population, who is most at risk, is composed of adolescents, I would like to know for the year 2010 how many of these campaigns focused on schools and for 2011 how many again will focus on schools. The hon. Minister may respond in sign language if she so wishes.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I hope that I will not have to use a sign language when the hon. Member will ask me a question next time, but still, Mr Chairperson, I am trying to get the information and I will circulate it to him.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, at page 460, item 232654 - *Probation Officer*, can I know from the hon. Minister as to why there is a decrease in the number of Probation Officers from 31 to 29?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I have just mentioned, Mr Chairperson, that there is a recruitment process on, right now.

(Interruptions)

There are people who have been promoted.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, while my colleague was asking about the decrease in the number of Probation Officers, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that they have been

promoted. True it is that the Senior Probation Officer, funded position has increased, but these positions have increased by 1, from 18 to 19 whereas the number of Probation Officers has decreased from 31 to 29. If we need 31, it is funded position.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Chairperson, there are five Probation Officers being presently recruited and the number will come to 34. These are funded positions.

Programme Code 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation (Rs64,425,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands – Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government was called.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, at page 467, *Programme 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities - P2: Development of a new Grant-in-Aid formula*, will the hon. Minister elaborate on the formula and state where matters stand?

Mr Aimée: The Grant-in-Aid formula is a formula used to allocate Government grant to Local Authorities. The last Grant-in-Aid formula was devised some 20 years ago based on criteria like kilometres of roads, drains and street lighting points. As there has been a lot of development in 20 years, there is need to review the Grant-in-Aid formula to better reflect the actual needs of each local authority. The Ministry has launched invitations for expression of interest and requests for proposal in 2009. After evaluation, there was only one responsive tenderer, however, the procurement exercise was cancelled...

The Chairperson: I am sorry; this is under Programme Code 462. We are going to come back to it.

Mr Aimée: But the first question was on Programme Code 461.

The Chairperson: No. I take it, but, in fact, the hon. Member mistook. This item Grant-in-Aid is under Programme 462 and we are with Programme 461.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 463 – *Programme 461: Policy and Management of Local Government - Achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the employment of public funds*, can I ask the hon. Minister how he intends to achieve same, what is the target and whether there will be a specific unit at his Ministry to ensure that public funds are being used and not abused?

Mr Aimée: I will circulate this information afterwards.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 463 - *Programme 461: Policy and Management of Local Government - Achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the*

employment of public funds, we were made to understand that the Ministry had an internal audit section. I would like to know whether that unit is still alive and how many reports have been prepared during the past year. I would also like to know whether the hon. Minister is satisfied with the performance.

I have a second question at page 463, under item - *Provide effective support and coordination in the Local Authorities, the Fire Services, the Beach Authority and the Outer Islands Development Corporation*. It concerns the policy and management of his Ministry. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, for each sector mentioned, there is a dedicated desk with somebody personally responsible? Are these different sectors working with the dedicated persons? How many persons are dedicated to each specific section of his Ministry?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, there is a general provision and the internal audit squad works actively as and when the measures are implemented, including the Fire Services, the Local Authorities and the OIDC.

The Chairperson: What about any dedicated desk regarding the coordination?

Mr Aimée: We have one PRO who is attached to the desk of the Outer Islands Development Corporation on a regular basis.

Mr Lesjongard: I will get back to the internal audit squad. Can the Minister inform the House whether the audit squad has carried out any inquiry with regard to the problems that we have had in the Northern District Council?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 463 regarding *Major Services to be provided for 2011-2013 - Provide effective support and coordination in the Local Authorities, the Fire Services, the Beach Authority and the Outer Islands Development Corporation*. May we know from the hon. Minister who is the Chairperson of the Beach Authority and how many staff there are and whether there have been any complaints regarding their abuse of authority with regard to that Beach Authority?

Mr Aimée: I do not have the exact number, Mr Chairperson, I will circulate it afterwards, but, yes, there have been complaints.

Mr Obeegadoo: I go back to the point raised by hon. Bhagwan, on page 463 the objective of *achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the employment of public funds* and I also refer the Minister to page 464 where it is said that *a new GIA formula should be developed for the allocation of grants to the Local Authorities*. Considering indicators and targets, there is nothing concerning this new Grant-in-Aid formula. Will the Minister tell us

whether funds for 2011 will be applied to the purpose of defining a new Grant-in-Aid formula and when will he commit to coming up with this new formula?

Mr Aimée: The new Grant-in-Aid formula is almost ready now taking care of all the aspects that the hon. Member has mentioned and surely it will be improved compared to that one of 20 years ago.

Mr Bhagwan: I come back to the audit unit of the Ministry. Can the Minister inform the House whether there are follow-ups concerning the recommendations and findings of this audit section and whether cases are even referred to the Police; if so, which cases and has there been any prosecution?

Mr Aimée: To my knowledge, there has been only one at the Municipality of Port Louis.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 464, *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - Achieving energy efficiency in street lighting* and refers also to *a study for a long term plan* in this relation. Apparently the Ministry has recruited a consultant. I would, therefore, wish to know as it does not translate on page 467 into any specific indicator and target, when the study is to be completed and made public.

Mr Aimée: I will get the information needed from my officials, but, in my opinion, we have already started to make available 50,000 LDG bulbs.

Mr Nagalingum: Under the same item: *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - Achieving energy efficiency in street lighting* and refers also to *a study for a long term plan*, has the consultant been recruited?

The Chairperson: The Minister is going to provide it.

Mr Lesjongard: I will get back to that Grant-in-Aid formula, the Minister has stated that the existing formula is outdated and the Ministry is working on a new one. He has also given the elements for working on that formula. Can I know from the hon. Minister what are the new elements that will be considered in order to make the formula fairer?

The Chairperson: Is the Ministry still working on it?

Mr Aimée Yes, it is not yet officialised.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 464, *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed* – with regard to Agalega, can the Minister inform the House whether the MOU which was supposed to be...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please. Hon. Assirvaden, you do not have the floor!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister, at least, inform the House whether the MOU, which was supposed to be signed between the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd and the OIDC for the problems of Agalega, has been done.

The Chairperson: I see that it is ...

Mr Bhagwan: Let me read, Sir – *It is proposed to explore the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd in this respect.*’

The Chairperson: No, hon. Bhagwan, there is no MOU, it is proposed...

Mr Aimée: This might come in the future, but, up to now, not to my knowledge.

The Chairperson: I see that it is clear that it is only a project.

Mr Aimée: This is a project.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 464, *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed* - the construction of an interim hazardous waste storage facility. May I know whether the site has been identified and, if so, may we know the exact place?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Sir, the site is at La Chaumière.

Ms. Deepalsing: May I know from the hon. Minister, in regard to the *Major Services to be provided for 2011-2013* • *Provide effective support and coordination to the Local Authorities*, whether, for example for Quatre Bornes, the plan for sorting of *les déchets*, his Ministry is envisaging the support to the Municipality of Quatre Bornes to have this sorting effective everywhere in Quatre Bornes?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we are doing this project in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. In a very near future, we will apply it in Quatre Bornes.

Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government (Rs33,234,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities was called.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, on page 471, *Programme Code 462* under item 26312004 - *Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill*, can the hon. Minister table a breakdown of the allocation to each and every Municipal Council?

Mr Aimée: There is the breakdown for each Municipal Council in the Estimates, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Nagalingum: I want a specific breakdown.

Mr Aimée: I will circulate the information later.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 471, *Programme Code 462: 26210 - Current Grant to International Organisations*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether Mauritius through the Ministry is still a Member of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bhagwan: When is it scheduled to be held?

Mr Aimée: The next meeting will be in Cardiff, in February next year.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 471, under *Programme Code 462: 31 - Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, can the hon. Minister confirm that all the local authorities are fully equipped with IT and software because I don't see any estimate for 2011?

The Chairperson: It is the acquisition of IT Equipment.

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to page 471, item *22120 - Fees*, we are paying fees to the tune of Rs450,000. Of course, there is *Licence Fees for Oracle Technical Support* which amounts to Rs120,000. What about the difference? To whom are the fees being paid and for what services?

Mr Aimée: Fees for the Chairman and members of the committee amount to Rs20,000, and Rs100,000 is for training fees.

Mr Baloomoody: Which Committee is it? Is it the House Committee? Who are the members of this committee?

Mr Aimée: I don't have this information.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, on page 471, under item *26312005 - Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes*, in the same vein as the question that was asked before by a Member of the Opposition, could the hon. Minister kindly circulate a breakdown of the grant of Rs159 m. within the Municipality of Quatre Bornes?

Mr Bhagwan: Under item *26312009 - District of Black River*, the hon. Minister is perfectly aware that, *en termes de superficie, c'est la plus grande*, there is an allocation of Rs112 m. In the past budget, we have seen that nearly 80% of that grant goes to scavenging services. What action has the hon. Minister taken to correct this anomaly – for us it is an anomaly? Apart from this sum of Rs112 m. to the District Council of Black River, is there any other support for the development of the region?

Mr Aimée: There is a big disparity in the Grant-in-Aid formula between the rural areas and urban areas. In fact, the hon. Member is right to say that. That's why, since January this year, when I was appointed Minister, I have been trying to work on not only the

Grant-in-Aid formula, but on many other aspects where there is a disparity between urban and rural areas.

Mr Barbier: On page 463, *Major Achievements for 2010*, you will see projects that have been funded from the Local Infrastructure Fund; amongst, is the Multipurpose Complex at Résidence Vallijee. Being given that this complex has been constructed on the volleyball pitch of Résidence Vallijee, the First Division female team is deprived of same. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is providing funds for the construction of a new volleyball pitch at Résidence Vallijee.

The Chairperson: Is there any new volleyball pitch at Cité Vallijee for women?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, concerning the project of the Multipurpose Complex at Cité Vallijee, works have already started before I took office at that Ministry. I don't even know whether there was a volleyball pitch for women. In case the hon. Member wants to have a volleyball pitch in his Constituency, we are prepared.

The Chairperson: That means the hon. Minister is going to consider it.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 471, under item 22160 - *Overseas Training*, may we have some details please?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 471, under item 26312 - *Current Grant to Local Authorities*, and at page 463, *Major Achievements for 2010*. With regard to the purchase of 50,000 CFL lamps by the local authorities, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this was a single tender, the cost of the tender and who won the tender exercise?

Mr Aimée: Concerning the first question on overseas training, it's for air tickets and subsistence allowance of officers attending workshops and seminars abroad in the context of local government. During this year, our officers attended the Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Executive Programme on Finance for Sub-national and Local Governments.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two issues, Mr Chairperson. On page 463, reference is made to a review of the business processes of Local Authorities; I'll refer the hon. Minister to page 467 which sets indicators and targets. Now this review seems to be a very protracted process whereby we will have to await 2013 for 90% of the review to have been achieved. May I request clarifications as to why such an essential task will require three years before it is even completed? That is my first question linked to this issue of efficiency in our Local Authorities. The second point is...

The Chairperson: One by one, please!

Mr Aimée: From the information received Mr Chairperson, the aim of this review exercise is to engineer operation of the Local Authorities and benchmark on the best practices so as to improve efficiency and effectiveness and service delivery.

With regard to the operations, these are: review collection process, issue of building and land use permit process, complaint management, scavenging service, infrastructure work.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question has not been answered. My question was: why does it necessitate three financial years to achieve 90% of the work? Why can't it be expedited if we are committed to effectiveness and efficiency in public spending?

Mr Aimée: From the information I have, Mr Chairperson, it will be effected on a sector basis.

The Chairperson: It is going to be on a sector basis and it is going to take longer; it can't be done earlier.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 463, *Programme 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities - funding of key infrastructure projects through the Local Infrastructure Fund*. I won't go into the detail where it is situated. How does this Local Infrastructure Fund function? Is it situated in your Ministry? Who chairs that Committee and what is the budget of this Local Infrastructure Fund for the coming month? Are projects implementation effected and controlled as well?

Mr Aimée: With regard to the functioning of the LIF, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry chairs the Committee together with various members from different Ministries, including the Ministry of Finance. The Local Infrastructure Fund is met for market fair, multipurpose complex, football ground, tennis court, stadium and even for the transfer station.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 471, item 26312 - *Current Grant to Local Authorities*. Can I join others, firstly, in requesting that the breakdown for Curepipe be circulated like for other towns?

Secondly, I am asking the Minister whether it is the case that for all these local authorities the funding provides for the proper setting up of a customer care mechanism. The Minister speaks of local authorities as a service; we support that, but it is a total disaster, at least, in Curepipe. Will he prioritize that issue, if it is not already the case?

The Chairperson: Does the Ministry have a customer care at each Municipality?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I am responsible of the Ministry...

The Chairperson: If you have the information, just provide it.

Mr Aimée: No, Sir!

Programme code 462 – Facilitation to Local Authorities (Rs1,957,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 463 – Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities, was called.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 462, *Programme 463: Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities - Operation of a new transfer station at La Chaumière*. Can we have more details on that item?

Mr Aimée: The new transfer station has already been constructed at La Chaumière and it will be operational by the beginning of February next year.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning this transfer station at La Chaumière, do I understand that the one at Mont Roches will be closed? Can the Minister tell us whether it will be closed and then rehabilitated? Will the infrastructure remain there or will there be a parting away?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the transfer station at Mont Roches is on a private land belonging to Médine and we are almost at the end of our deed. That is why we will change to go on a State land at La Chaumière.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, maybe the Minister can take notes and then he will reply. On page 472, *Programme 463*, item 26210077 *Contribution to United Nations Trust Fund (Basel Convention)*, can the hon. Minister say where we are with regard to the operation of that Convention within his Ministry? Who is responsible for the follow-up of the Basel Convention at the Ministry? Is Mauritius in compliance with the provisions of the *Basel Convention* which, I think, has many loopholes?

Secondly, on page 472, item 31113007 - *Infrastructural Works for the Relocation of Inhabitants of Mare Chicose*, where are we with the relocation? Under item 31113009 - *Construction of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities/Stations:(a) Cell 6 at Mare Chicose Landfill Site; (b) Cell 7 at Mare Chicose Landfill Site* – provision will be made up to when? Is it until Mare Chicose will be operational?

Thirdly, on the Beach Authority...

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I can't take all of them at one go. I'll take one by one. Mauritius is the signatory of the Basel Convention since 1992, hence Government is committed to control the movement of hazardous waste...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, let the Minister answer! I have no control over the answer. The Minister is going according to his notes.

Mr Aimée: The Solid Waste Department deals with this organisation to implement sound management of hazardous wastes; examples of projects – I think in June or July, we exported five tonnes of obsolete chemicals and hazardous wastes to Gruyere in Reunion which is a sub-company of France. It deals with the hazardous wastes.

The Chairperson: Are we in conformity?

Mr Aimée: We look at all the parameters. In fact, we have the five departments.

The Chairperson: All right! The Minister has answered. Relocation of Mare Chicose!

Mr Aimée: This is a long overdue process, Mr Chairperson and since my appointment, we have been working on that with other colleagues in Parliament. Mare Chicose is now relocated to Marie-Jeannie in Rose Belle. All the infrastructures are there.

The Chairperson: It is in process.

Mr Aimée: Almost finished!

The Chairperson: Cell 6 and Cell 7 at Mare Chicose landfill site.

Mr Aimée: As far as Mare Chicose landfill site is concerned, since 1997, there was provision for six cells and I think, by February, the last cell will be completely full. My Ministry is envisaging to prepare Cell 7 next to 12.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, at page 472, the programme that we are asked to vote is entitled *Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities*. I see there is item *22060 Maintenance*. I did not know where else to find it, the landscaping part of this, I am going on the maintenance of Rs800,000 for this programme. I don't know whether this maintenance is about landscaping. My question is about the town of Quatre Bornes which is supposed to be *la ville des fleurs*. Does this landscaping bit apply to *fleurir tous les espaces publics de Quatre Bornes parce que je continue à dire que c'est la ville des fleurs, mais je n'y vois aucune fleur*. No flowers anywhere!

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is here!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I think the hon. Member is completely out of subject...

(*Interruptions*)

No, it is not meant for landscaping, it is meant for maintenance; provision required for flooring and renovation of Emmanuel Anquetil offices. There is nothing to do with this.

The Chairperson: No, the question is whether there is any provision for landscaping, especially for Quatre Bornes.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member mentioned item 22060 *Maintenance*; that's what I can read here.

Ms Deepalsing: My question, Chair, was that the title of the programme is called *Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities*. There is a part of landscaping; I could not find it in any of the items so, I was wondering whether that maintenance was the landscaping. I want to know what landscaping we are talking about in this programme. Where is the landscaping?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order, please! The question is whether there is any provision for landscaping.

Mr Aimée: No.

The Chairperson: No, there is none. Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Programme 463 - Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities*, can the hon. Minister inform the House concerning *collection, treatment and disposal of electronic waste and other hazardous waste*....

The Chairperson: Sorry, hon. Lesjongard! The hon. Minister wants to know the item. Put the question item per item, please!

Mr Lesjongard: At page 472 under item 22070003 *Operation of Landfill Sites*, my question is with regard to *collection, treatment and disposal of electronic waste and other hazardous waste*.

The Chairperson: Beach Authority!

Mr Lesjongard: No, no, I am talking about item 22070003 *Operation of Landfill Sites*. My question is with regard to *collection, treatment and disposal of electronic waste and other hazardous waste*. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication where the treatment of e-waste is being carried out and with regard to the disposal, how much does it cost the State every year to dispose electronic waste?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Seetaram, please! I cannot listen to everybody at the same time. Yes, about e-waste, please!

Mr Aimée: That is for operation cost of Mare Chicose Landfill Site and the decrease is due to expected 25% waste being diverted to composting system.

The Chairperson: No, do we have something about the e-waste; the cost for e-waste? Most probably, the hon. Minister has the information which is coming. Yes, it's coming, you'll have it now, I am sure.

Mr Aimée: Yes, from what I have got as note, Mr Chairperson, there is a special cell at Mare Chicose for hazard waste proceeding with RFP for collection and disposal.

(Interruptions)

In fact, as I mentioned before, we are creating an interim hazard waste storage which will cater for the hazard waste problem.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum, last question!

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, at page 472, item 28222021 - *Other Capital Transfers – Compensation for the Relocation of Inhabitants of Mare Chicose*, can we know whether all the inhabitants have agreed to move and secondly, when the compensation will be paid?

Mr Uteem: Can I know whether any cash grant will be given to the inhabitants?

Mr Bhagwan: I have one question, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: I will allow one last question to hon. Bhagwan. The question, hon. Minister, concerns the relocation of inhabitants of Mare Chicose.

Mr Aimée: Provision has been made for compensation to the inhabitants of the existing houses at Mare Chicose. The amount payable is Rs76.5 m. out of which Rs72 m. is for compensation and Rs4.5 m. for the connection of electricity and water. It was assumed that compensation would have been paid in 2009 once the inhabitants had their houses constructed at the Rose Belle relocation site, but there had been delays with the processing of documents at the Notary. Compensation to the tune of Rs9 m. has been released to some six families. It is estimated that in 2011, a further amount of Rs40 m. will be disbursed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 472, under item 26313003 - *Current Grant: Beach Authority*, we are being asked to vote several millions of rupees concerning that authority. The hon. Minister has just stated that he, himself, is not satisfied with the running of the Beach Authority. Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that he will recommend to the hon. Prime Minister the overhauling of the Board and even the General Manager who is subject to severe criticisms? Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that, when we will be asked to vote the next Budget, the Board of the Beach Authority would be renewed and the Director-General asked to *leve paké aller*?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made a request that necessary action be taken. It was not an item on the vote; it was a mere suggestion of a general nature and this has been taken care of and we are moving for the vote.

(*Interruptions*)

Programme 463: Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities (Rs838,042,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention was called.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea, if you have any question, you don't wait till I state: 'the last one' and then you raise your hand. I am sorry.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 473, item 31122803 - *Acquisition of Fire Fighting Equipment*, will the hon. Minister state the number of new fire fighting tankers that will be purchased in order to renew the existing fleet in which many of them date more than 10 years?

Mr Aimée: Provision is required for the fixing of fire hydrants and new pipe laying project of CWA and the upgrading of fire fighting equipment.

Mr Nagalingum: Under the same programme, there are some 31 vacant posts of firefighter and 9 of Senior Station Officer. Can we know whether the posts will be filled in this coming year?

Mr Aimée: In the budget, we have provision to recruit 40 firefighters?

The Chairperson: Will it be done this financial year?

Mr Aimée: Yes.

Mr Bhagwan: I take it on the *Programme 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention*. Can the Minister inform the House whether action is being taken to maintain and renew all the fire hydrants? This is a major problem. Fire hydrants are placed everywhere, will they be maintained? How many of them are operational and how many are not operational?

Mr Aimée: Yes, the fire hydrants are maintained everywhere. In Port Louis, I know there are 35 Fire Fighting Officers who have regular checks on these fire hydrants.

The Chairperson: Hon. Miss Deepalsing, please! Hon. Bundhoo, I am sorry, wherever you are I hear you!

Mr Seetaram: At page 473, item 31112024 - *Construction of Fire Stations: (a) New Flacq Fire Station*, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to when it will be operational?

Mr Aimée: It has already been inaugurated since one month. It is operational.

(Interruptions)

Mr Nagalingum: At page 473, item *31112424 - Upgrading of Fire Stations*, can I ask the hon. Minister which fire stations are being upgraded and whether the relocation of Quatre Bornes Fire Station is being considered as land acquired has already been vested?

Mr Aimée: In fact, in this budget, provision is made to construct a new fire station at Rose Belle and upgrade the Quatre Bornes Fire Station.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 468, *Programme Code 464* as usual Indicators and Targets. I have questions on P1: Percentage of emergencies for which emergency call handling, dispatching and turn out time does not exceed 3 minutes – 95%. This is the target. I want to know whether this is already the case because 2010 is being used as the base line, but then it remains the same over the next three years.

Second question under P2: Percentage of cases where initial deployment of firefighting vehicles to building/structural fires is within 12 minutes - we are told that reaching the place where the fire services are being called would be 12 minutes in 80% and 85% of the time. Is this realistic, given the number of vehicles that we have under the locations of fire stations?

Third question ...

The Chairperson: We take the two. I don't want to mix up the hon. Minister if the hon. Member does not mind.

Mr Obeegadoo: I hope I will have the opportunity.

Mr Aimée: In fact, for *O1 Emergency Services* it is mentioned 95% success. I think it is excellent.

Mr Nagalingum: I come back to my question on item *31112424*, the hon. Minister has not answered to it.

The Chairperson: The upgrading of the fire station.

Mr Nagalingum: He has not answered that.

The Chairperson: I understand that the hon. Minister stated that a new fire station will be constructed at Rose Belle and the one at Quatre Bornes will be upgraded.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 473, on item *31112024 - Construction of Fire Stations - (d) New Rose Belle Fire Station*, I see that provision has not been made for both 2010 and 2011. Can the Minister clarify this?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is right. There is no budget allocation.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 473 under *Programme 464*, item *31112024 - Construction of Fire Stations* and to page 464 - *Programme 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention*. On the third line, it is mentioned '*Implement the new Fire Services Act*'. Mr Chairperson, this has been announced since last year when the present Chief Fire Officer was appointed. Can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand and when the new Bill will come to Parliament?

The Chairperson: The Fire Services Act.

Mr Aimée: In fact, the hon. Member is right. The Fire Services Act is long overdue. My officers at the Fire Department are working on the new Fire Services Bill to be presented in a very near future. We were busy working on the Local Government Bill.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: On page 473, item *31122803: Acquisition of Fire Fighting Equipment*, will the hon. Minister be agreeable to circulate the list of fire fighting equipment which is to be bought?

Mr Aimée: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to item *22120 Fees* at page 473. We are paying fees of Rs300,000 every year. Who are the beneficiaries and for what purpose?

Mr Aimée: This is meant for training.

Mr Baloomoody: We are going to vote. We have to know who are the beneficiaries of this training and who give that training?

Mr Aimée: I don't have this information. I know some of them have been asking for leave to go abroad. I also know that there is an association in Mauritius including our firefighters working in it but I don't know the name.

The Chairperson: Yes, if you have the information later on. We take hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 468, item *P2: Number of fire safety inspections*, can the Minister please inform the House where these inspections are carried out and how the places for inspection are prioritised?

Mr Aimée: From what I learn there are 1800 inspections.

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, I didn't hear the answer. The figure 1800 is there before me, of course, I know that, I need not put the question. The question was: which places are visited, how are they prioritised? Are these just public buildings? What are they? Hospitals, schools, how are they prioritised?

Mr Aimée: In fact, the firefighter officer has regular inspections all over the country. There are listed premises. The Chief Firefighter releases a team to check whenever the need arises.

The Chairperson: It is done at random, I understand.

Mr Aimée: This happens whenever the firefighter gives a fire certificate to have the BLP.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Seetaram: Hon. Minister, at page 473, concerning *Programme 464 - 31121 Transport Equipment*, could the Minister provide details as to why the estimates have climbed up to Rs4 m.?

Mr Aimée: The provision is made because we require two mini buses of 25-seater.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Chair, at the same page, under items *31121 - Transport Equipment* and *31122 Other Machinery and Equipment*, can the Minister inform the House whether for next year's vote, provision is being made for the purchase of lorries with high rise ladders. Year in, year out, we ask questions about the ladders. The previous Minister gave assurance to the House for the purchase of lorries with high rise ladders. How many of the existing ones are operational?

Mr Aimée: I think it is a very good question from the hon. Member. As I had mentioned before, since my appointment as Minister, I was looking into the risks that can happen particularly in Port Louis with those 25-storey buildings where our lorry ladder now goes probably up to six storeys. When preparing the budget, I asked to have funds made available for, at least, a 20-storey ladder. The hon. Member is right to have mentioned that.

The Chairperson: Okay! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 473, under item *21111 - Other Staff Costs*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received representations from the trade union of the firefighters regarding equipment, uniform and others and whether their request has been attended to?

Mr Aimée: I must say the hon. Member is a very good Opposition Member.

The Chairperson: Please, please!

Mr Aimée: He just asked that question a few weeks before.

The Chairperson: Did you give the answer?

Mr Aimée: In fact, the provision in the Budget is to pay the money owed to the officers who have been working supplementary hours on holidays.

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, time is over.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 473, under item 22060 - *Maintenance*, we are spending more than Rs10 m. Can we have details on the contractor who is doing this maintenance?

The Chairperson: Details about the maintenance – if the Minister could circulate it because we are out of time. We take the vote.

Programme 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention (Rs367,249,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 465 - Outer Islands Development was called.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 474, under item 26323070 - *Capital Grant - Outer Islands Development Corporation: Airstrip Rehabilitation*, I see that there is an amount of Rs 60 m. for 2010 and then Rs50 m. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this amount has been spent and where are we regarding the rehabilitation of the airstrip?

Mr Aimée: I would say no because the project is still at the level of tendering process and I think, after the New Year, that is, in February, we will launch tender. This money of Rs60 m. is budgeted for next year and for year 2012.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether Le Dornier can land on the present airstrip?

Mr Aimée: This is the only purpose of getting by air to Agaléga and on a special rescue flight.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions. Programme 465: Outer Islands Development - Rehabilitation works to the Agalega airstrip, why are we having to spread the works to be undertaken over three years since it is such an old problem. It appears we have to wait until 2013 for it to be completed. That is my first question.

The Chairperson: Please, I understand that this question was put by hon. Mrs Labelle.

Mr Obeegadoo: No. My question is about the spread of the project time. I have two questions. Do I put both now?

The Chairperson: Yes, you put it on this issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, on this Programme.

The Chairperson: No, we take it one by one. Why is the amount spread over so many years?

Mr Aimée: This is the decision of the Minister of Finance. I think the question should not be addressed to me.

The Chairperson: Ok. It is a question of funding.

Mr Aimée: These are the procedures. I understand that the provision for the first year is Rs60 m., then it is scheduled on two or three years maybe.

Mr Obeegadoo: My second question is: travel under emergency cases. Does it fall under the Budget of the Ministry of Local Government and where is that?

Mr Aimée: It is in the Budget of Outer Islands Development Board, because it is very separate. They have got a Board with Members and Chairman. They decide their own policy.

Mr Obeegadoo: In that case, since there are regular complaints as to the inadequacy of funds and the Minister knows this very well since he was directly involved in this matter, does he consider that to have the same budgetary provision as last year is adequate or will he agree to review it?

Mr Aimée: I would say yes.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No. Okay you are going to review it.

Mr Aimée: You say that the Budget is not enough for Agalega, but I must say I do not complain, because so many things that have been done in Agalega. We have now taken our precaution to have a Refugee Centre in case of flood/tsunami. There is much money spent in Agalega for the replantation of coconuts amongst others.

Mr Lesjongard: Page 474 item 26313002 - *Current Grant: Agalega Island Council*, the Minister has just mentioned the Tsunami Refugee Centre. Can he give an indication to the House as to whether the project is now completed and its cost?

Mr Aimée: The project is completed since May this year and has cost about Rs7 m.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under item 26323070 - *Capital Grant: Outer Islands Development Corporation - Fire fighting facilities*, there is a budgeted amount of Rs10 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister why...

Mr Aimée: Rs10 m. ...

Mr Ameer Meea: Please, listen carefully.

The Chairperson: No, please, don't make comments.

Mr Ameer Meea: Sir, about firefighting facilities a sum of Rs10 m. is earmarked in the 2011 Estimates. Can I ask the hon. Minister what type of facilities are there in Agalega because it is in my Constituency and I have not yet been there?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, have you any details about the firefighting facilities?

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, in fact, while we are preparing for fund for the airstrip in Agalega, simultaneously, we are looking at the firefighting equipment which probably would cost more, but now for the airstrip, there is fire equipment in Le Dornier plane as in any other plane going there. This is only a provision while studying whether there is need for more for the future.

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 26313070 - *Current Grant: Outer Islands Development Corporation*, can the Minister inform the House whether, in the bulk vote of Rs53 m., there is an amount earmarked for the development of St. Brandon Island and the small islets around it? Can the Minister give a breakdown of the projects earmarked for St. Brandon Island?

Mr Aimée: In fact, we are not spending much money on St. Brandon because it is under the security team, that is, the Prime Minister's Office. We are now creating a helipad for the new helicopter from Mauritius to St. Brandon and probably we can bring fuel via St. Brandon to Agalega.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on page 478 under *Programme 465: Outer Islands Development*, I am looking at the funded positions, but I see nothing for Outer Islands Development. Do we have staff for this programme? Can we have some explanation regarding this state of affairs?

Mr Aimée: You mean for Agalega.

The Chairperson: No, for Outer Islands Development.

Mrs Labelle: For each programme we have the funded positions except this one, so can we have an explanation for this situation?

Mr Aimée: When you look at the Budget there are provisions for staff here on the top.

Mrs Labelle: For this programme, there is no funded position. Can we know why, because for each programme you have a funded position except for this one?

Mr Aimée: We have one PAS, one AS, one HO.

Programme Code 465 - Outer Islands Development (Rs123,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 581 Health Policy and Management was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, initially I have a few questions, but I will start with the first one evidently. I would like to ask the Minister...

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Please, which page?

Dr. S. Boolell: Page 491.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Deepalsing, please!

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 491 under item 22130001 - *Studies and Preliminary Project Preparation* - (a) *Feasibility study for an Institute of Women's Health*; (b) *Feasibility study for a Paediatric Hospital*; (c) *Feasibility study for a Mid Way Home*; (d) *Feasibility study for a National Health Laboratory Services Centre*, have bids been called for and could the hon. Minister give us an update on the situation right now?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Institute of Women's Health, we are still looking for land. As regards the Paediatric hospital, we are also looking for land. Land is being identified. The Mid Way Home is a project that has just been initiated; we have to do the feasibility study as it is being said here. With regard to the feasibility study for the National Health Laboratory Services Centre, it has already been done and land has been identified.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, can I know from the hon. Minister who is conducting those feasibility studies?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, these feasibility studies have just been put into the Budget so it is now that we will be working on these projects.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, at page 491, item 22130001 - *Studies and Preliminary Project Preparation*: (e) *Other studies*, an amount of Rs125,000 has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister say what other studies are being envisaged for this item?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There may be any other study which is warranted during the course of the year so this is a contingency.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, at page 490, item 22060 - *Maintenance*, an amount of about Rs6 m. has been earmarked for the next two years, and then we note a certain reduction almost going half of it. Can the hon. Minister reassure the House whether this sum will help towards meeting the complaints from the Director of Audit concerning the X-ray machine, the lithotripsy machine and the arm magnifier which are always breaking down in the hospitals? Can the hon. Minister guarantee that they will be in working condition now?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, this particular item, 22060 - *Maintenance*, is meant only for maintenance of building, vehicles, IT equipment and so on. We will try to see how best we can secure what we have.

Dr. S. Boolell: We have documentation from the Director of Audit, Mr Chairperson to this effect. There is one more thing I would like to ask. I find the absence of a referral to any sum which has been allotted for the Geriatric Hospital. Somewhere, mention is made of equipment for Geriatric Hospital. Could the hon. Minister kindly inform the House what is the state of affairs?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, for the Geriatric Hospital, it's for this financial year, we already have provision for a Geriatric Hospital.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 481, under *HIV and AIDS - A Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (BBS) Survey on female sex workers and men having sex with men (MSM) have been undertaken from July to September 2010*, can I know what is the outcome of the survey?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, *il n'y a rien de péjoratif, et je ne pense pas qu'il faudra allier the MSM party à MSM...*

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member *a fait des railleries là-dessus. Laissez-moi lui dire qu'il ne faut pas mettre les deux ensemble.* Men having sex with men, this exists, *et nous avons fait un* survey. This survey was conducted in November and December 2009 and it revealed that there is HIV prevalence in injecting drug users, which is of 47.3%; Hepatitis C prevalence in injecting drug users is 97.3%; the geographical concentration around the District of Port Louis: 42.4% and Plaines Wilhems: 34.1%. The estimate of the injecting drug users' population size is around 10,000, amongst whom 950 are female.

With regard to the final report regarding men having sex with men, it has just been received at the Ministry. It is currently being analysed by the technical staff and, thereafter, the findings will be disseminated and validated by all stakeholders.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a database, if we have to achieve the target or give certain service to these HIV/AIDS victims? What target have we reached now with regard to treatment, and what target are we pointing at?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There is a database. In fact, we work according to the database that we have and we are working at the same time with NGOs.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 480 - *Major Achievements in 2010: Public Health.* It is being stated that: *the Secondary School Health Programme has been strengthened. 162 visits have been carried out and 21,987 students of Forms III and Lower*

VI were screened. Maybe, the hon. Minister could give us a list of the schools which were visited with the corresponding number of students per school. This is my first request.

My second point, Mr Chairperson, is still on the same page: - *Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)*. I find that there is a Smoking Cessation Clinic which has been set up. I would like to know where and whether this clinic is in operation. Maybe, she can give us the number of patients who have attended this clinic.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Secondary School Health Programme, I can say that, from February 2007 to October 2010, 702 visits have been effected in colleges reaching around 98,996 students, including 169 visits effected from January to October whereby 24,186 students were reached. As for the list of schools, it will be compiled and will be given to the hon. Member later on.

With regard to the Smoking Cessation Clinic, it is operational at Odette Leal Community Health Centre in Beau Bassin since May 2009. It is supervised by a psychiatrist and other staff that include one psychologist and one community physician. They are working on a sessional basis. I can tell the hon. Member that an evaluation is scheduled for this year.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 492, item 27210008 - *Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius*, I note a reduction in the amount earmarked. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is because patients can be operated in Mauritius, and is there any provision made to provide financial assistance to patients who can be operated in private clinics in Mauritius where this service is not given by the hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, the hon. Member is right. The provision has been reduced as it is expected that patients will be treated locally by foreign visiting teams.

With regard to private clinics, I am working on a Memorandum of Understanding with some of the clinics for these patients to be treated in Mauritius.

Ms Deepalsing: At page 491, item 22120007 - *Fees for Training* there is an amount of Rs11 m. that was allocated for last year and again for next year. I guess this means that there is no new training or the amount of training will be the same so is that the case? This is my first question. Secondly, would the hon. Minister be able to give an idea of what kind of training these are and who are providing them?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The provision to meet training cost is in respect of post graduate course on hospital management, post graduate studies in anaesthesia, internal medicine, ophthalmology by the Université Victor Segalen de Bordeaux II. We have a training course in pharmacy dispensing and pharmacy store management. A training of trainers' course on reproductive health is scheduled. We also have the regional training of trainers, courses on

logistic management information system and training of trainers in breast feeding. We have got provision for this year and we have made provision for next year also.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we go back to page 481 regarding *HIV and AIDS – Under the Global Fund Round 8, Mauritius is benefitting some 7M Euros over a period of 5 years, starting year 2010 for implementing HIV and AIDS Programmes*. May I know from the hon. Minister if we can have some details about this plan and what is the total cost for its implementation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As from this year, under the Global Fund, Mauritius is benefitting from a total sum of 7M Euros spread over a period of 5 years for implementing projects to fight HIV/AIDS obviously and we have worked out a national strategic framework from 2007 to 2011.

Funds which have been earmarked for the Ministry of Health in 2010 amounts to around €725,000 and it will provide means to strengthen the health system, training of health personnel on various HIV/AIDS topic, procurement of automated methadone dispensing machines, scaling up of voluntary counselling and operational plan which includes activities aiming at educating specific target groups and the population at large on HIV.

The Chairperson: Time is over! I will urge the hon. Minister to be shorter in her replies. I understand that I have no control over the answers but if she could be as short as possible.

Mr Obeegadoo: The Chairperson has allowed questions on HIV/AIDS whereas there is a specific Programme 584 on HIV/AIDS coming later. Mr Chairperson, I think that it is only fair that we should be allowed some questions on this very programme.

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, it is on the overview of the Ministry and we have been going like this for the last Ministries. The hon. Member is aware of it as he has been asking questions and whenever it is on a strategic note, I cannot do otherwise.

Mr Obeegadoo: If the Chairperson has been listening to me, which I am sure he has, I have taken care to ensure that points raised on the major achievements were related to the programme.

The Chairperson: I must tell the hon. Member that the first Programme is about *Health Policy and Management*. It is quite general, the hon. Member will agree with me.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, but can I suggest, since there have been questions on HIV/AIDS, the Chairperson takes a few minutes to...

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, no! There has been an announcement from Mr Speaker and we have to stick to our timing.

(*Interruptions*)

No intervention, please! I am sorry.

Mr Obeegadoo: Then I would simply suggest that this Table be pulled back so that people on this side as well might be within the sight of the Chairperson.

The Chairperson: If I take the number of interventions on the part of the hon. Member, he will not be able to say that I have been discriminating to any Member.

(*Interruptions*)

I am sorry, but this is how I interpret your remark! Last question on this item!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr François: On page 480, under *Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)*, may we know from the hon. Minister when will the NCDs Survey 2009 Report for Rodrigues be officially published?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is ready and maybe in two weeks time.

Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management (Rs408,097,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 582: Curative Services was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 493, item 22140002 - *CT Scan and MRI Fees and Materials*. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether these include payment of fees to the private clinics for CT Scans?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, it does.

Dr. S. Boolell: If, as promised by the hon. Minister earlier in a Parliamentary Question, she will be buying her own scan machines, will this sum know a reduction over the next year, because I find the same sum being earmarked?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes. Mr Chairperson, in fact, this includes for private clinics as well because, very often, since our equipment are overused, it happens that we get a breakdown of equipment and we have to send them to private clinics. In spite of the fact that we are buying new equipment, it can happen so we have to provide for it.

Mr Lesjongard: On the same page and under the same item, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many such CT scanners and MRI equipment we have and how many are in good working condition; is the maintenance now done by officers from her Ministry or is it still being contracted out?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: With regard to the number of MRI, I know that we do have one at SSRN Hospital and one in Victoria Hospital. We have a CT Scan in Jawaharlal Nehru

Hospital as well as in Victoria Hospital. It is still being done by our staff though we do not have sufficient staff; when this cannot be done, then we have to contract out.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 493, *Programme 582: 31 - Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets: 31112003 Construction/Extension of Hospitals*, may I know from the hon. Minister when the Geriatric Hospital will start its operation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As I just said, Mr Chairperson, the funds have been made available for this financial year. I replied to a Parliamentary Question earlier and I said that procedures are already on, tenders have been issued and that this is being evaluated.

The Chairperson: Does the Minister have a timeframe?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: By the end of the year.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 494, item *31112006 - Construction of Mediclinics: (a) Plaine Verte Mediclinic*, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the total cost of the project and when will it be operational?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I will get the information from my officers.

Mr Obeegadoo: I'll refer to pages 493 and 494. Under item *22140 - Medical Supplies, Drugs*, there is a significant increase. In fact there is a 50% increase in the budgeted sum. Just for the sake of transparency, may we know what is changing here? Apparently, it's Medical Disposables and Minor Equipment which is the main item. That is my first question.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I did not get the hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is not clear. Let me start again! On page 493, five items from the top, under item *22140 Medical Supplies, Drugs*, the estimates from one year to the next are increasing by 50%. In the interest of transparency, could it be explained to us what is the change there that justifies such an increase? On the next page 494...

The Chairperson: Let's take this one. Does the hon. Member have the information? In fact, she has got two items here.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I reply for the Plaine Verte Mediclinic? It will be ready and operational in May 2011.

With regard to item *22140 - Medical Supplies, Drugs*, there is an increase in the range of services provided to our patients. For example, we are opening a new Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, a Medical Intensive Care Unit at Flacq Hospital; there is provision of Insulin Analog for type 1 diabetes, scaling up of methadone substitution therapy and an increase in the price of raw materials on the world market. There is an increase in the cost of freight; an increase in the purchase of expensive drugs for treatment

such as cancer, chronic renal failure, cardiac diseases and a relative increase in the consumption trend of pharmaceutical products.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under item *31121801 - Acquisition of Vehicles*, I would like to know whether this relates to ambulances generally. Again, here, the budget is increasing from Rs20 m. to Rs52 m. Does this relate to ambulances, if so, may we be told - since this is a regular complaint MPs get carrying patients to hospitals – how many ambulances we have in all right now and how many are posted to the main hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As regards the number of ambulances we have for the time being, I have to get the information from my officers, but I will reply to the second part of the question which relates to the provision which has been increased. It is provision made for the purchase of window vans to be converted into ambulances, vans for dialysis unit, two mobile caravans for screening of breast cancer, two mobile dental clinics. So, we are going for bulk purchase of 15 window vans, 5 cars and 5 minibuses. Now, the number of ambulances that we have for the time being is 59.

Mr Seetaram: I refer to page 493, item *31112003 - Construction/Extension of Hospitals:(b) New Block C, Flacq Hospital*. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister can provide information as to how many Blocks there are and if there are any further construction ahead.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, the hon. Member is referring to the construction of New Block C, the contract has already been awarded to Tianli Construction in June 2009, for a cost of Rs125 m. Works started on 28 July and are due to be completed by end of December.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 494, under item *31112403 - Upgrading of Hospital:(e) Victoria Hospital*, one of the main problems for those attending hospital by car concerns parking. Even ambulances and medical officers are suffering from this problem. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether that problem is being taken care of under this vote or in another vote and if not, why not?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I believe the hon. Member is referring to parking problems in all hospitals or to one particular hospital.

Mr Bhagwan: Victoria Hospital.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, I have made a plan. We are now restructuring the whole place for parking. Since we have got congestion problems, there will be a second exit at the back. The parking area is being worked out again. This may be ready in some three months' time.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, on page 492 under item *21110010 - Allowance icw Internship (Pre-Registration Training)*, the sum which has been paid to interns over this year, will be reduced by half over the next year. Does it mean that fewer interns will be taken or they will be receiving reduced salaries?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, the provision has been reduced as there are actually 80 pre-registration doctors and they will complete their two years' training in April or June 2011. So, provision for payment of allowance to 277 pre-registered doctors and 2 pre-registered pharmacists actually in post has been made.

Dr. S. Boolell: Sorry, I don't think the hon. Minister got me quite right. There is a large number of interns right now every year coming in. The sum allocated has been reduced from Rs80 m. this year to Rs43 m. next year. Seemingly, some will either be not employed or not paid.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No, maybe the hon. Member did not get me right; I just said that the provision has been reduced as there are 80 pre-registered doctors actually; they will complete their two years' training in April and June 2011. So, provision has been made for six months till June 2011 and if ever we get other internship for pre-registration, then we will ask for funds from the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Uteem: On page 493, under item *31112003 - Construction/Extension of Hospital: (a) New Jeetoo Hospital*, I note that there is still around Rs1.1 billion of budgeted cost. May I know from the hon. Minister what was the original contract amount for this project; has there been any delay caused by contractors and what measures have been taken against any contractor in terms of penalty fee?

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Concerning the internship course, I would like to get more information. I think there is an on-going yearly intake of about 100 interns mainly from SSR Medical College; the hon. Minister is talking of six months. Hasn't this been going on for the last five years? Why is there a provision for only six months when, say in June, there will be a new intake? Then there won't be any provision, and the students will have to wait.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I just explained, maybe the hon. Member did not get my explanation right. I just said that we have got 80 right now. They will complete their internship in June, so provision has been made for six months. After six months, if we have got others who come for pre-registration, then we will ask for funds from the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to item 22090 - *Security*. I take it is security for the building, the equipment, but there is another main problem which has been expressed by many members of the staff regarding security of the staff at the hospital - nurses and doctors. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether a specific provision has been made for this type of security?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: For Jeetoo Hospital, let me say that there has been no change in construction costs and the contractor is still the same. With regard to security of personnel, which question did the hon. Member ask specifically?

Mr Baloomoody: I know that we are voting for security of equipment, building, material. Is specific provision being made for the security of staff - nurses and doctors?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, I have been dealing with this problem because we have had some problems for security of our staff. I have taken a series of measures and I said last week in Parliament that the first thing that we are doing is that we are raising all the fencing. If we have more than two or three entrances in the hospital, after 6 o'clock, we are closing some of them and will use only one entrance. We are reinforcing Police presence and we are asking all ward managers to close the doors of their wards at a certain time, around 6 o'clock. The most important of all this is the camera surveillances which we will have.

Mr Seetaram: I am referring to page 493, item 31112003 - *Construction/Extension of Hospitals: (m) New ENT Hospital*. May I know whether the Minister could provide information as to the sum of *Rs15,300,000* which has been earmarked and whether the Minister could provide information as to the description of the new ENT Hospital, where exactly will there be new blocks or new wings?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, the *New ENT Hospital*, of course, will be at the same place where the *ENT Hospital* is and the construction will comprise of a basement, a ground floor for accident and emergency and *OPD*. There will be a first floor for operating theatres and wards, a second floor for wards, and since funds were not made available in 2010, the project was freezed.

Mr Bhagwan: On item 22090 - *Security Services*, can I ask the Minister whether she will take into consideration the *physique de ces gens de sécurité*. Those people who are working in hospitals - we have made the point recently - they themselves should be taken to the hospital, they are old people above 65, 70 of age. Can the Minister give the assurance to the House that *Security Officers*, whether it is private, should be of such calibre so as to be a deterrent and can protect the Public Officers?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 493, item 22070002 - *Laundry Services*, there is a sum of Rs37,250,000. We are made to understand that there is a new operator responsible for laundry and for the past months or years, the quality of service has gone down. We will be spending millions again, can the Minister give the assurance and see to it that there is no problem of quality of the service.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes.

The Chairperson: Requesting that the quality be considered and reviewed.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, concerning security, let me say once again – I know I said it in a previous PQ - that I am reviewing the whole specification for tender. We are saying that we won't accept any tender whereby those contractors come and tell us that they are taking people above a certain age. These people should be well built. Concerning *Laundry Services*, we have been having a current supplier - I won't mention the name - but I have been receiving complaints and I am now in the process of saying whether we can refuse the contract.

Programme Code 582 - Curative Services (Rs6,514,624,000) was called and agreed to.

Programme Code 583 – Primary Health Care and Public Health was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I wanted to raise an issue which concerns several different programmes. It is the issue of under-five mortality which is mentioned on page 480, which concerns health policy, curative services, but also I take it *Primary Health Care*. Since this is a long-standing problem, as the Minister knows, we have been taken to task internationally for our relatively high rate of under-five mortality. Will the Minister consider having this integrated within the indicators and targets so that we can, year after year, monitor progress, at least, until we reach the level of other countries that are on stage of development like Malaysia and Sri Lanka which do a better job.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson this has been my concern also. The projected rate for under-five mortality for this year is 15.3, but I should say that Mauritius is making progress towards the millennium development goals. Observing decreasing trend may be insufficient to reach the targets of reducing by two-thirds, but certain measures had been taken. I can enumerate the measures taken if the hon. Member so wishes, but I am monitoring.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a suggestion - if the Minister will answer - that for years to come we have this as a specific indicator with targets.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, this is what I said; I have taken certain measures with targets.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I have a question for my Constituency at page 495, item 31112005 - *Construction of Community Health*. The Community Health Centre at Plaine Lauzun had been pulled down some time back and a new one was to replace it, I would like to know where matters stand?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for the construction of six new Health Centres and I see that there will be a new one at Plaine Lauzun.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 488, *Programme 583: Environmental Health Engineering Unit - 03: Monitoring of Environmental Hazards*, my question would be on noise pollution. This problem has been increasing over months - I can't say within this mandate, but since years. Can the Minister inform the House whether this Unit responsible for the noise pollution is being boosted up, not only in terms of personnel, transport, but also in terms of equipment? Is it working in collaboration with the Police of the Environment and the Police itself? Can the hon. Minister inform the House of actions taken in the forthcoming Budget? Under item *O2: Monitoring of food premises for food control and safety*, we all know this problem of people cooking on the road with all the sanitary problems involved. Will the Health Inspectorate/Government Analyst Division be provided with additional staff and transport? Will there be a sensitisation campaign as we are in the dry season and at the eve of the end of year activities? People are cooking everywhere and every place thus causing pollution and health problems.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has made his point!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue - *P2: Attendances to noise, odour and related complaints*, we find on page 488 that we have attended 100%. May I know how many complaints we have received? How many have been prosecuted and how many have been convicted under this item?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Environmental Health Engineering Unit, it is an enforcing agency with respect to drinking water, noise, odour and everything. We are working together with the Ministry of Environment on this issue. Besides we have registered noise complaints which have been dealt with.

With regard to *O2: Monitoring of food premises for food control and safety*, there is a health inspectorate and a flying squad. We have inspected 85,456 premises for the period January to October 2010. 5,360 notices and 130 prohibition orders have been served. There

have been 605 contraventions and the seizure of 311 tonnes of foodstuffs not in conformity with food legislation.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am on page 487, *Programme 583 - P4: Number of current users of contraceptive methods*. The target for this coming year shows an increase of only 200. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she will implement a particular programme in vulnerable areas where the youth will be included because of the increase in teenage pregnancy?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, the staff of my Ministry, together with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, we have just worked out a programme on this issue of contraceptive methods where we have included the vulnerable areas.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seetaram!

Mr Seetaram: At page 495, I refer to item *31112005 - Construction of Community Health*. The objective of the Ministry is to alleviate the high congestion of central hospitals by way of decentralisation. Can the hon. Minister inform us whether the Community Health Centres will be built near the central hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, I have a complete programme for reviewing the Primary Health Care and as I have just said we are going ahead with the construction of Community Health Centres and the upgrading of Area Health Centres. In fact, my objective is to make more people go towards the Community Health Centres and Area Health Centres and less going to the hospitals.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: At page 495, items *22100 - Publications and Stationery* and *22120 - Fees*, the estimates for *Publications and Stationery* take a severe drop in 2011 and same for the *Fees*. I would like to know what are these fees and why is there this drop?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Publications and Stationery; I cannot see Fees there.

The Chairperson: Just below; two items.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Okay, two items. The reduction in the Budget for Publications and Stationery is due to the fact that the information and education materials for sexual and reproductive health project had already been produced in 2010 and will be used for the three coming years.

The Chairperson: For the Fees?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Now, for the Fees, the amount has been reduced as the expenses for training and delivery of talks on sexual and reproductive health programme are being met under item *Allowances* and not under this item.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the training programme is private; are extra fees being paid? Is it not an in-house training?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Member asked about the reduction and I have told him that the reduction is due to the fact that the fees are being paid under another item - *Allowances*.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister help me reconcile the fact that, on the one hand, we are saying we have got to prioritise preventive medicine and, on the other hand, the overall budget under this programme - I am referring to page 485, *Programme 583 - Primary Health Care and Public Health* - is being reduced as compared to estimates from last year to this year by about Rs50 m. if my arithmetic is correct? Yes, that is the first part of my question. Secondly, on that same issue of prioritising preventive medicine....

(Interruptions)

Is that first question clear?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Second question on page 481, there is mention of a *Master Plan for Primary Health Care* which is to be developed over the period 2011 to 2013. Why, therefore, is that not an indicator with specific targets telling us when it will be ready?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, Mr Chairperson, concerning the *Primary Health Care and Public Health*, it's not a question of policy. The decrease is due to the fact that general workers were previously paid. If you look at the details on the other pages, you will see that there are general workers, previously paid under *Wages*, who are now being paid under *Personal Emoluments* so there has been a change from one item to another. As regards the new Health Centres, its construction has been freezed because we are awaiting the recommendations of the Master Plan for Primary Health Care.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are going to take two last questions. One, from hon. Barbier and one, from hon. Baloomoody on this issue, very briefly!

Mr Obeegadoo: The construction of Health Care Centres has been freezed on the one hand, but, on the other hand, we are not told when this Master Plan will be.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No. The Plan will be ready in February because we have got consultants who are coming.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Barbier! Very brief!

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Coming back to page 481; *Monitoring of food premises and food control and safety strengthened*. The hon. Minister gave us a list of premises which are being controlled. It is very good, but we can see that in Port-Louis, for example, food is being cooked in the open air, everywhere on the streets which is threat to our health. The law is here and the Food Act is there, but there is no enforcement.

The Chairperson: What is your question?

Mr Barbier: My question is whether the hon. Minister will take the necessary disposition to enforce....

The Chairperson: Additional measure for enforcement.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I can assure the hon. Member that I am doing everything to enforce the Food Act.

Mr Baloomoody: Under the *Sub-Programme 58302 - Public Health Services*, one of the objectives is to '*Prevent illnesses, injuries and hazards at worksites*'. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a specific unit?

The Chairperson: Is there a special unit at your Ministry?

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask whether there is a specific unit at the Ministry which visits work sites and gives counselling to workers and, if so, the number of staff and how much has been budgeted for that unit?

The Chairperson: You made your point.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There is, in fact, an Occupational Health Unit whose aims is to protect and promote workers' health through the prevention of occupational and other work related diseases and injuries by providing a safe and healthy working environment. We have got an occupational health service.

Programme Code 583: Primary Health Care and Public Health (Rs 869,974,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 5.01 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.34 p.m. with Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 584 -Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On *Programme Code 584 - Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*, there is an increase from eleven to thirty eight in terms of the staffing which, of course, we fully support. Can the Minister enlighten us on how this increase in the staffing will lead to a more efficient delivery of services in this area and when the new appointees will be in

place? Under item 09 43 57 - *Harm Reduction Nurse*, we have 24 new posts; can the hon. Minister explain the functions of that post and when they will be in place.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, we are scaling up the methadone substitution therapy under the Needle Exchange Programme. Obviously we will need more staff. We are setting up dropping centres and we are bringing in an aggressive campaign for commercial sex workers. In addition, we are having health education; regular counselling so we will be needing staff for all this.

Mr Bhagwan: With the Needle Exchange Programme, is there any inter-reaction between the Ministry, the regional centres or officers and the NGOs engaged?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, I am setting up a whole network with all NGOs involved because we are all working in the same direction with the same objectives.

Mr Baloomoody: Under the same item, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is some collaboration between the ADSU officers and those people who are under the scheme for the Needle Exchange Programme? There have been some victims who have been caught. Well they have their programme. As soon as the ADSU people find them to be in possession of a needle, they are booked for possession of needle for the furtherance of consumption of heroine. May I know whether there is collaboration between these two units?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: From time to time, we've got coordination meetings.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 496, under item 22030 *Rent* - I am using this item as an entry point, Chair, to ask from the Minister as regards dispensation of methadone. I understand for the Upper Wilhems, there is only one centre in Vacoas and drug addicts trying to reform find it very difficult to travel there and then to queue and wait. So, in the dispensation of methadone, quite apart from the social stigma attached to the practical term, it is very difficult for a drug addict trying to reform. Will the Minister tell us, within the very small amount here one million for rent, if there is provision for decentralisation of the services offered to drug addicts for methadone treatment?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, the provision which has been made for rent is, in fact, for facilities of events which are organised during the sensitisation campaign. It is not for rent being paid for the different locations. I am considering an evaluation of the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme and an evaluation of a Needle Exchange Programme so that we can know in which direction we should move.

The Chairperson: Hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Chair! I am still on the same issue. We are being told at page 481 that we have 16 Dispensing Units. While the Minister is looking into the whole

process, maybe she can table a list of these sixteen dispensing units. This is my first question. Secondly, I would like to seek information regarding the staff at these dispensing units, could she give us the number of persons who are attached at each dispensing unit, stating their title and who they are.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, this is a tedious exercise. It has to be worked out. I'll circulate this information.

The Chairperson: The sixteen dispensing units and also the staff attached to those units.

Mrs Labelle: What I want to know is whether there is a doctor, a nurse and/or a counsellor. I want only this information for the time being. Of course, the hon. Minister cannot give me all at once.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: We have a medical officer, a psychiatrist and some counsellors.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister can circulate the information.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just informed us that she will be commissioning a study, an evaluation on the whole Methadone treatment. In many regions where there is the distribution of Methadone, the inhabitants - residential, even the commercial operators - encounter lots of problems. You must be aware of that. While commissioning the study, perhaps with the help of other Ministries or the Police, the hon. Minister can consider the after-effect of the distribution of Methadone on the surrounding areas?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, usually the people, who come for their Methadone therapy treatment hang around and they are a source of nuisance.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the Minister whether she intends revisiting all the grants from her Ministry. I see that, under the item NATReSA, there are lots of organisations which get grants. I am not saying they are doing bad work, but they keep overlapping on many issues. The Human Trust Fund is one point for me.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, this year I will look into all the allocations and grants that we are giving to the NGOs. I am trying to see whether we can remove from certain who are not performing and give to others who are performing.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 496 under item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, as the hon. Minister may be aware, we, the MMM, on this side of the House, have found out that there is a very promising new drug in the treatment of addicts which is Suboxone. Will she consider, within this Budget of Rs17 m., setting up a panel of experts of her Ministry, medical specialists and other specialists to consider the advisability of using Suboxone as well as one way of addressing the drug addiction?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I will look into this, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: This is a question of policy, but I did not want to interrupt the hon. Member.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Minister to page 484, under *Programme 584 – Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*. I find that one of the objectives is to minimize the transmission of HIV in prisons. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a specific unit which deals with the prisons service; if so, how many people are attached to that unit and are they followed once out of prisons?

Dr. S. Boolell: Are all prisoners in admission to the prisons screened?

Mr Obeegadoo: Is there a systematic screening of prisoners?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, as far as I am aware, we don't have this for the time being, but I'll take the suggestion of the hon. Members.

The Chairperson: Is there any unit attached to prisons?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No.

Mr Seetaram: On page 496, under item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, can the Minister kindly inform the House why the sum allocated to publications and stationery has been reduced?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The provision has been reduced - I think I have replied to this question earlier to say education and information materials have already been produced this year so there is no need to produce more next year.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, still on the same issue, on page 508, under *Programme 584 - Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*, I do not find any psychiatrist, counsellor and so on under this programme. The hon. Minister said that the personnel include psychiatrist and even counselling, but we do not have any counsellor in the Funded Positions. This is my first question.

Allow me to put another question regarding the NATReSA. I am on page 496, 26 – *Grants*, item 26313 - *Extra-Budgetary Units* where a sum of Rs30 m. has been allocated. I would like to know the composition of the NATReSA Board and also if the Minister will, at a later stage, table a list of prevention activities or events that the NATReSA has carried out during this current year.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: With regard to the post of counsellors, in fact, it is provided in the programme for curative services.

The Chairperson: What about the Board Members and the Board activities?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The Chairman of the Board is Mr Lesage. As for the activities of NATReSA...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member can circulate the information if she does not have it now.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There is a whole list of NGOs as the hon. Member mentioned, for which NATReSA does the whole coordination. It has to see which amount of money has to be given to those NGOs.

The Chairperson: I take one last question from hon. Baloomoody.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 484, I come back to *Programme 584 - Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*. I find that one of the objectives is to - *Minimize the transmission of HIV among Most at Risk Population (MARPs) in particular: Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), Commercial Sex Workers (CSW), Prisons' Inmates (PIs) and the population at large*.

May I know again whether we have a specific unit which deals with the commercial sex workers and, if so, how many people are in that unit and how do we identify these people? Do we have a database and a specific programme for these people we are supposed to help? I want to know how do we identify, how do we collect data to ensure that we are giving support to the appropriate person?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made his point.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I said right at the beginning that we have had a surveillance survey done. From this survey, we have been able to collect data and this is from where we got our starting point to work with. We have got an AIDS Unit which deals with the commercial sex workers

The Chairperson: I take a last question. Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Page 488, *Programme 584: Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS 01 - AIDS Prevention Services; P1 Number of awareness and sensitization campaigns*, just for the sake of clarity, do the numbers here refer to the number of campaigns or the number of individuals reached by the campaigns?

Secondly, of the 1,200 campaigns or individuals whichever it is, is the Minister ensuring that schools, young people are prioritised and, if so, how?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, the figure refers to awareness sessions which have been made. There is a sensitisation and education campaign which is carried out in schools, work places and in deprived areas for women. They are all covered.

Programme Code 584 - Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS (Rs92,254,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 585 – Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 497, *Programme 585: item 28211016 - Other Current Transfers - NGO's for Anti-Smoking and Anti-Alcohol Campaign*, can the Minister confirm that budgeting an estimate of half a million is enough for anti-smoking and anti-alcohol campaign?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Let me tell the hon. Member that NGOs have other sources of funding also from CSR, for example. They don't rely only on this fund.

Dr. Sorefan: At the same page, item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, the amount is going up by nearly Rs6 m. Do we have any evidence-based that this helps for prevention?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Of course, this helps because our medical officers and our specialists need to keep pace all the time with what is happening in the medical field because it is a very dynamic one as the hon. Member knows. We have got a library where everybody can consult any of those publications which we purchase.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, at page 497, item 22030 - *Rent*, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to why the provision for rent has been drastically reduced?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Previously, we used to rent places for our activities, but now, there is a decrease due to the fact that activities are being held in public buildings for which no rent is paid.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, at the same page, under item 22100 - *Publication and Stationery*, there is a substantial increase of Rs6 m. and the hon. Minister just stated that the doctors need to keep pace in the medical field. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the doctors receive an allocation on their salary from the reading of these publications?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On top of that, they do receive. Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 497, under item 22120 – *Fees*, Rs2 m. is being given each year. May we know from the hon. Minister who are the beneficiaries and for what service?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The fees are meant for training of staff attached to the NCD Unit and for the physical instructors attached to health clubs.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I have a more general question concerning the overall Budget, if I may refer to page 497. We have a significant increase, almost doubling of the Budget for this programme, which, again, we very much welcome. We just want to understand how these funds will be applied. I note that, on the equipment side, the major increase is for acquisition of machinery and equipment, could that be explained to us? Then, on the staffing side – by the way, my question on the other programme on home reduction nurses was not answered - here again, we have a new grade of Health Promotion Nurse. I want to know whether that relates to NCD prevention or to dental preventive services. I am not very clear - can I have some explanation as to the budgetary increase?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, as I have said several times we are putting emphasis on the prevention side for NCDs, that is why the Budget allocation has increased considerably.

With regard to equipment, we are purchasing hi-tech equipment in all our hospitals. Furthermore, we have got provisions in the Budget for acquisition of other machinery and equipment. It is for the purchase of physical exercise equipment for health clubs, conditioners, setting up of health tracks.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether this programme caters for the *Caravane de la Santé* which goes everywhere around the island thus inviting people for blood test, etc. Is this Budget the same which caters for this type of activity and, if so, is there a planning? What had been the programme for the preceding year and is Government contemplating purchasing new mobile units to accelerate what I consider is a very good initiative?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Chairperson, we have got a very well-planned programme for the Prevention and Control of NCDs. As the hon. Member has mentioned, we have got plans where we are bringing health to the population and we have got an aggressive campaign through our mobile clinics.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 484, *Programme 585 – Raising awareness and promoting healthy lifestyle to improve quality of life*, I link that to item 28211 – *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions* found on page 497 where we have an allocation of Rs500,000. I would like firstly to know to which NGO this amount will go and secondly, regarding the equipment, the hon. Minister has mentioned the setting up of health clubs. May I know where these health clubs will be set up and what will be their opening hours? Will the

health clubs be run in collaboration with NGOs or will they be solely under the responsibility of the Ministry?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Most health clubs are under the responsibility of the Ministry because we are putting equipment in the Social Welfare Centres and in the Community Centres. We are putting equipment where the public can have easy access to them.

We already have 7 health clubs and we are proposing to put 25 additional ones. I will circulate the list of the places where we have the health clubs and where the 25 additional units will be set up. The operational hours are as from 4.00 p.m.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue with regard to health clubs, the hon. Minister is saying that they provide equipment for certain specific centres which are run by another Ministry. May I know who will maintain these centres? This is the main problem. We have equipment which is not working because they are not properly maintained. There is a conflict as to whose responsibility it is to maintain them. Is it the Ministry on whose responsibility the equipments are or is it the Ministry which supplies the equipment?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No, it is under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and, as at now, I have not received any complaints from whoever to say that the equipments are not working. If the hon. Member has got any information, I would like to have it.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, at page 497, under item *31121 – Transport Equipment*, I note that the sum of Rs5,700,000 has been reduced to Rs3 m. Can the hon. Minister provide some information?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I think that I have already given the information that we are providing three window vans with seats for the LCD unit and we are also making a bulk purchase of vehicles for the Ministry.

The Chairperson: On the transport equipment.

Dr. Sorefan: On item *21 - Compensation of Employees* at page 497, I can see that there is an increase of Rs810,000 whereas on the preventive side at page 508, as my colleague, hon. Obeegadoo had mentioned, there is an increase of about 16 for which I congratulate the hon. Minister as we should spend more money on prevention than on curative. Will this sum of Rs810,000 cater for new staff for year 2011?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Provision has been made for the funding of 49 posts of Health Promotion Assistants and 14 posts of Health Promotion Nurses.

Programme Code 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (Rs70,480,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Arts and Culture - Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Arts and Culture was called.

Mrs Radegonde: I have some issues for clarification at page 511. Under *Main constraints and challenges and how they are being addressed*, it is stated that *A White Paper, including the findings and recommendations of the study carried out on the Cultural Industry, is being prepared. A Sector Strategic Plan 2011-2020 will be developed to implement the policies and measures in the White Paper.* I would like know from the hon. Minister who forms part of that committee, how often they meet, where have they reached on the White Paper and whether he will table a copy of it and the time frame for that?

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may add a suggestion, as some Ministries have done may we have a specific indicator with targets 2011-2012-2013 for the White Paper on the one hand and for the Strategic Plan on the other so that we may follow and approve the appropriate funding.

Mr Choonee: As at now, it is the Ministry, that is, all our officers who are directly involved. Definitely the time frame is up to March 2011, which means that, after having worked out at the level of the Ministry and getting clearance from Government through Cabinet, we will make it public. We will then allow the whole of Mauritius to have a look at what it is all about and getting more inputs. After March 2011, we will be in a position to give more details.

Mrs Radegonde: I have another question on the same page in reference to the Copyright Act 1997. I can see that there are two experts who are working on that project, I would like to know their names and the amount disposed for this project.

Mr Choonee: I do not have the names as at now, but I can table them. They are experts from the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). They worked with all stakeholders and a draft Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Bill was prepared and submitted to WIPO which found it to be too elaborate. They will be having another meeting in January.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, please do not elaborate! Is there any sum payable to the experts?

Mr Choonee: I do not have the figures.

Mr Barbier: I would like to ask the Minister whether the local stakeholders have been consulted so far as the Copyright Bill is concerned. Are there other requests from other groups or artists or producers who are waiting for a meeting so that they can express their views on the forthcoming Copyright Bill?

Mr Choonee: The grant came from WIPO and they consulted all the stakeholders in Mauritius.

Mr Ganoo: This issue concerns piracy. The hon. Minister knows that recently there has been a lot of controversy with a special category of operators where the films operators also were concerned. We know what has happened and so on. What is the policy of the Ministry on that?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, we have had some problems with two groups of operators; one is the cinema hall owners and the other is the video shop owners. There was a cut-off date, 30 September 2010, and once this cut-off date was fixed, we stopped allowing video shop owners to sell pirated cassettes and DVDs. Now we are working on a scheme to present to Government on how best we can work out a formula for a win-win situation for both parties.

Mr Baloomoody: May I take the Minister to page 510 on *Major Achievements for 2010* where it is said: *the number of artists assisted under financial schemes increased from 90 in 2009 to 115 for period January to September 2010*. Will he kindly circulate the list of names of the artists who have benefitted under this scheme?

Mr Choonee: Definitely, Sir.

Mrs Radegonde: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has a record of the implementation of the Copyright Act and the situation of piracy. I would also like to ask him whether he considers a Copyright Committee for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Copyright Act.

The Chairperson: This is a question of policy, but the hon. Member has made her suggestion and we will take it.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 515, *Programme 621: Policy and Management for Arts and Culture – 21: Compensation of Employees*. I link that to the number of funded positions which will be increased from 24 to 26 for next year. When I look at the figures of compensation of employees, there is an increase of almost Rs4 m. and it is the same thing for personal emoluments with an increase of Rs3 m. With an increase of 2 posts where one is an Officer while the other is a Confidential Secretary, can the Minister enlighten us as to why there is such increase in the personal emoluments?

Mr Choonee: The department did not exist prior to my coming into office as it was under the Department of Education. The sum earmarked was for 6 months only, and then the new Government came in with me as Minister and some more officers.

Mr Barbier: I am at page 515, item 22160 - *Overseas Training*. May I know from the hon. Minister who are the persons who received overseas training? Can we have a breakdown for the current year with the persons who benefit from same and the amount disbursed in each case?

Mr Choonee: Yes.

Mrs Radegonde: I would also like to have the type of training that they received.

The Chairperson: We take another question in the meantime?

Mr Choonee: We have had no training, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Seetaram!

Mr Seetaram: Concerning page 515, under item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, can the hon. Minister please enlighten the House as to the increase from Rs175,000 to Rs220,000?

Mr Choonee: It is for the purchase of newspapers, books, periodicals, subscription fees to news service, publicity, public notices and stationery which include paper, ink, toner etc.

The Chairperson: Hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, allow me to come back on this question of compensation of employees. The hon. Minister has mentioned some figures and I want some clarification concerning this matter. The hon. Minister mentioned six months but the figure we have is for the 2010 Estimates. The question that the Ministry did not exist before him is not really correct, because it was there. Why this question of six months? Is he telling us that the figure of Rs12 m, which we see here, on page 515, relates to six months and that is why there is the increase to Rs16 m.?

Mr Choonee: It is the Minister's salary with all the allowances, increment of 2011, provision for filling of vacancies for the post of Confidential Secretary and those of advisers.

The Chairperson: Hon. François!

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, it is just a general question. May I ask the hon. Minister how many sites, monuments and buildings from Rodrigues are listed under the National Heritage list and how many are being studied to be included in the list?

The Chairperson: Any other sites to be included?

Mr Choonee: I will compile the list and circulate it.

The Chairperson: Is there any new building in Rodrigues to be included?

Mr Choonee: For Rodrigues

Mr François: Yes. The Minister can circulate the list just for general information.

Mr Choonee: Yes, we are working on that. We'll have some officers going to Rodrigues again.

Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Arts and Culture (Rs17,546,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture was called.

Mrs Radegonde: At page 516, Programme Code 622, under item 22130 *Study and Surveys*: (a) *Development of Framework for Film Industry* and (b) *study on the setting up of the Mauritius Symphony Orchestra*, I will like to know if the contract has been awarded and, if yes, to whom?

Mr Choonee: No contract has been awarded, Sir.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seetaram!

Mr Seetaram: On page 516, under item 22060 - *Maintenance*, could the hon. Minister please enlighten the House in relation to the decrease in the estimates for maintenance?

The Chairperson: We take another question in the meantime. Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: On page 513, Programme 622, O2: *Provision of support to local artist for the development of their artistic and cultural industry*, P1: *Number of Artists Assisted under the Different Financial Schemes*, could the hon. Minister tell us the number of artists and the amount of financial assistance which is presently given? We understand that, in some cases, the maximum is Rs15,000. Can the hon. Minister consider also reviewing that financial assistance and if he can elaborate on that?

Mrs Radegonde: On the same issue, I will like the hon. Minister also to give us details about the different financial schemes.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue, if the hon. Minister can clarify and tell us what are the criteria one has to meet to benefit under that scheme?

Mr Choonee: The first one is about the maintenance issue. The decrease from Rs6.6 m. to Rs4.99 m. is because we purchased five new vehicles last year and, of course, we are not purchasing any more this year.

Concerning the general assistance that we give to artists, we have attended to 175 artists.

The Chairperson: What are the criteria?

Mr Choonee: We have an application form at the Ministry, which I can table at a later stage. We have different categories definitely. There is one scheme, which is the

general assistance scheme. The sum of Rs15,000 to Rs20,000 is for public address system, transport, *cachet*, exhibition panel etc. Then there is another Rs15,000 scheme for the production of CDs, publication of books, holding of exhibitions, production of films and plays. We assist in international participation grant schemes, which is quite a heavy sum. We have already attended to 60 such cases. The total is 175, as I said; 64 for international participation grant scheme, 80 for the production of CDs and 40 for assistance of transport and public address system. The holding of the event is a must and the exposure to be given to the artist is another one.

The Chairperson: If it is a long answer, please circulate it. Hon. Mrs Radegonde!

Mrs Radegonde: At page 516, still under Programme Code 622, item 26313044 - *Current Grant: Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA)*, there is a sum of Rs950,000 which seems stable over the years. I would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister. In 2005 the grant was Rs1 m. and MASA has an expenditure of Rs12 m. So, the expenditure is higher. I know that they can get the share of copyright. Would the hon. Minister revise the grant for MASA please?

The Chairperson: It is a humble request; we don't take it as a question.

Mr Barbier: On the same issue, as the hon. Member just stated, the MASA has a budget of around Rs12 m. yearly, out of which Rs10 m. are for salaries and only Rs1 m. come from Government and it is like that for the last 20 years.

The Chairperson: What is the hon. Member's question, please?

Mr Barbier: Being given the actual situation, I would like to know whether the Minister would consider the possibility of increasing grants to the MASA for the reason that I have just mentioned and take into consideration the posts of officers there ...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made his point.

Mr Barbier: ...transferring from other public bodies to MASA and ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier, it is a question of policy and you have made your point. I have been patient listening to you, but we should give everybody the opportunity. You have repeated the same thing as the hon. Member. Next question, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 514, Programme Code 622, regarding the *Centre de Lecture*, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many centres are operating in Mauritius and in Rodrigues and where are they located?

Mr Choonee: Let me just refer to MASA, we have no intention to increase the grant that Government is giving to MASA, because MASA is a revenue generating institution. For

the year 2010, it got Rs14,712,520. They collect revenue, they get money, so we don't intend to give them any further grants unless there is a problem.

Coming to the second part of the question concerning CLAC, it has been replaced by CELPAC, *Centre de Lecture Public et d'Animation Culturelle*. We have 16 in all, 12 in Mauritius and 4 in Rodrigues. I can table the list with all the details, but there are five new ones coming and they will be in regions of Mare Tabac, Fond du Sac, Flic en Flac, Baie du Cap and Pailles.

Mrs Perraud: On page 511, as regard to Programme Code 622, will the Minister be kind enough to give us information about the events to promote social cohesion among the different cultures. I would like to know who will organise those events *et est-ce qu'il y a un calendrier qui a déjà été établi?*

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue - this is linked - the *Mauritius Cultural Centre Trust* on page 517, which is supposed to do precisely what the hon. Member has said, appears to be the *parent pauvre* of all these Cultural Centres or Trusts. Will the Minister keep this in mind while responding to the questions and give us some information?

Mr Choonee: Coming to the events, we have 17 for next year; National Drama Festivals in ten languages, for the artists...

The Chairperson: Please circulate the list!

Mr Choonee: I will circulate the list.

Mr Baloomoody: I want to come up with what hon. Obeegadoo has said. Why is it that the Mauritian Cultural Centre gets a grant of only Rs600,000 whereas the others get Rs3 m.?

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Baloomoody, this is the same question that hon. Obeegadoo has asked. The Minister answered to the hon. lady first and now he will reply.

Mr Choonee: Yes, I have replied to the first part and concerning the second one the objectives of the Mauritius Cultural Centre are being revisited, we will have more consultations.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 516 under item 26313102 *Current Grant - Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund*, there is a sum of Rs6.3 m. Is the Minister aware that the accounts of the ICC Trust Fund has not been made public since 2006 and if he can give the reason and also is he aware that today the ICC receive the visit of the ICAC?

The Chairperson: This is not a question of account.

Mr Uteem: On the same item of the ICC Trust Fund, in an answer to a PQ a few weeks ago, the hon. Minister stated that he is waiting for the Chairman of the ICC to come

back to reconstitute the Trust. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Board of Trustees of the Trust has been reconstituted and whether those Members who are currently illegally appointed have tendered their resignation?

The Chairperson: Unfortunately this is not a question concerning the Budget. It has nothing to do with any budgetary allocation. I am sorry, I won't allow this question.

Mr Ameer Meea: I am still waiting for a reply to my question about the accounts of the Trust Fund which have not been made public since 2006.

Mr Choonee: As far as the accounts are concerned, Mr Chairperson, ICC's accounts are ready, and are being audited by the National Audit Office.

Mr Bhagwan: A la page 516 concernant *Current Grant - Mauritius Film Development Corporation*, nous avons une dotation de Rs8.2 m. Est-ce que le ministre peut dire s'il est de son intention de revoir toute l'organisation du MFDC ? Qui sont actuellement le Chairperson et le General Manager et où se trouve le siège de la Mauritius Film Development Corporation ?

Mr Choonee: Actually the MFDC exists; it has a budget. The Chairperson, Mr Christian Nayna, has resigned and we are reviewing everything at the MFDC. We are coming up with a new framework. The General Manager is Mrs Kamla Ramyead.

Mr Ganoo: On page 517, items 26323103, 26323104, 26323105, I see in the case of three Cultural Centres Trust, namely; *Capital Grant - Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust (HRKAD Fund)*, *Capital Grant - Telugu Centre Trust (HRKAD Fund)* and *the Capital Grant - Tamil Cultural Centre Trust (HRKAD Fund)*, that, as far as the capital grant is concerned, no funds have been provided for next year. Can we know the reason and whether any request has been made for this year 2010 as well?

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you Mr Chairperson. The hon. Minister confirms that the Trust's accounts have not been made public since 2006. Can I know the reasons? Secondly, the post of the director of ICC is vacant; can I know when the vacancy will be filled?

The Chairperson: No, I have given some latitude, but the hon. Member cannot come here with supplementary questions on a question of administration, I am sorry. The hon. Member had some latitude and he has asked three questions on the same issue.

Mrs Perraud: On page 513, Programme Code 622, I would like to know what are the criteria to benefit from this assistance?

Mr Choonee: I have just stated the criteria, Sir.

The Chairperson: Sorry, I won't allow the hon. Member one more question; I'll will give it to hon. Barbier who has not put any question on that item.

Mr Barbier: On page 517, under item *28212014 - Assistance to Artists*, may I know whether these funds are going to the artists or to the event organiser?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, let me start by giving some light on the Cultural Trust Funds.

The Chairperson: The Minister has to be very brief.

Mr Choonee: I just want to say that the three Cultural Centres mentioned by hon. Ganoo are being provided with a fund of Rs1 m. under the *HRKAD Fund* and this year also assistance is given to the Cultural Centres.

Mrs Radegonde: At page 517, Programme Code 622 under item *28212014 - Scheme for Concerts*, I would like to know if it is for local artists or both local and foreign and if it concerns the 50% scheme which the Minister has mentioned in the programme.

Mr Choonee: This will be applicable as from January 2011 and all local artists and organisers will benefit from that scheme by 50%.

Programme Code 622 –Promotion of Arts and Culture (Rs205,147,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 623 – Preservation and Promotion of Heritage was called.

Mrs Radegonde: On page 518, *Programme Code 623* under item *22030 Rent*, I would like to know why there is an increase in rent.

Mr Choonee: There has been a revision by the landlord.

Mr Seetaram: On page 518 under item *22120 - Fees*, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House concerning the estimates of *Rs1,042,000* which have been reduced to *Rs42,000*?

Mr Choonee: I will reply to the question concerning rent. There has been an increase from the landlord by 30%. As far as the fees are concerned, a sum of Rs1 m. has been moved to item *22130 - Studies and Surveys*, for the study on the setting up of a virtual museum on the history of Mauritius.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 514, *Programme 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage, O1: Rehabilitation and preservation of national, historical and cultural sites*. As far as *Batterie de l'Harmonie* is concerned, this is an old historical building situated at Black River and this building is in a decrepit and abandoned state; people have come and stolen the roof, the wood and so on. The hon. Minister answered a question. Is this included in the programme the year?

Mr Choonee: The three Martello Towers are included and site visits have already been effected, even by Ministers and technicians.

Mr Ganoo: No, this is not the Martello Tower; this is another building close to the same area, but called the *Batterie de l'Harmonie*.

The Chairperson: I am sure you are going to visit it.

Mr Choonee: We have visited already. We have earmarked the project and it will be done.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 518, item 22090 *Security*. Can we know the name of the firm?

Mr Choonee: It's SOS Guards.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 518, I refer to item 26313030 - *Current Grant: Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund*. Can we know from the hon. Minister who has replaced our able friend, who has done a good job, and whether this Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund *est en panne*? Can the hon. Minister let us know who is there, and what plan of action we have now for the Le Morne project?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on this *Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund*, we see that the estimate for this year is Rs7.5 m., and the same sum has been earmarked for the three coming years. Could the hon. Minister give us breakdown of the sum which has been spent on this item, and why the same amount has been kept for the three coming years?

Mr Choonee: These are projections. Let me start by telling the House that our hon. friend was a very effective and dynamic Chairperson, and we have not yet reconstituted the Board. We are having consultations and we have...

(Interruptions)

No, it is not *en panne!* The Planning Division of the Ministry of Housing and Land will confirm the proposed area for the Le Morne landscape. We are working with the private owners there to finalise the deal.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Choonee: 50% of the works have been done and definitely, as at now, Mr Mathieu Laclé is acting as officer.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning page 518, I refer to item 26210124 - *Contribution to the Convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO)*, item 26210126 - *Contribution to Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers*, and item 26210127 - *Contribution to Association International des Archives Francophones*. Could the hon. Minister enlighten the House, on a comparative note, as to why a low amount of the contribution?

Mr Choonee: That depends on the size of the association. It is at source. We do not decide on that.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: On page 519, under item *31112417 - Upgrading of Cultural Complex/Buildings (b) Restoration of La Tour Koenig Tower*, could the hon. Minister report progress on the project, stating whether contract has been awarded? If yes, who is the successful bidder, the cost of the project, when will it start, and when is it due to be completed?

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue, at page 519 with regard to *Programme Code 623*, I would like the hon. Minister to clarify because I would like to link it to *Programme 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage* on page 514. It is written here *P1: Number of sites and structures upgraded - 5*. But I can see (a), (b), (c); that means three. I would like some clarification under which other items are the two other upgrading structures to be found?

The Chairperson: I will allow last questions from hon. Ganoo, hon. Ameer Meea, hon. Baloomoody, and hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, concerning the *Renovation of La Tour Koenig*, in view of the danger that the tower constitutes, a sum of Rs3 m. has been provided in the Budget for its renovation. The works to be carried out comprise of a long list. Should I enlighten the House on that?

The Chairperson: No, please circulate it.

Mr Choonee: It is the demolition of the damaged concrete structure and carting away, the waterproofing of works at the top of the tower, erection of the...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Who is the successful bidder?

Mr Choonee: The contract has not been awarded yet. I have a long list of what is to be done.

The Chairperson: The scheme of works has been established. This is what I understand.

Mr Choonee: They have to bid and go forward with transparent procedures.

Mr Ganoo: At page 515, Mr Chairperson, *Summary by Economic Categories, Code 26 – Grants*. For the year 2010, there is a sum of Rs128,700,000; Rs135m. for next year, and Rs154 m. for year 2012. Can the hon. Minister tell us what these grants are for, and how this sum of Rs128,700,000 has been spent this year?

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 519, item *31132401 - e-Government Projects: Digitalisation of Archives* is a project that we fully support. Can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand concerning that project?

Mr Baloomoody: We have just learned - and this is of very serious concern - that we are called upon to vote public money for the services of SOS Guard. Can I ask the hon. Minister, now that the hon. Prime Minister has confirmed that the permit of SOS Guard has been withdrawn, whether he will make sure that we have a proper security service and that we have service for public money which we are called upon to vote? Can we make sure that, when the tenderers say that they have men, it's not men of 76 years old to 80 years old who are going to guard our premises?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has made his point.

Mr Choonee: Of course, we have to redeem the contract and follow the procedures as expected as Government does it usually. Concerning the grant, it is from HRKAD Fund.

The Chairperson: What about the details?

Mr Choonee: I will table the details later. As far as the electronic archive system is concerned, we have digitalised 10% only for the first year, and it amounts to about 77,000 pages which have been scanned. We are going very fast with it. It will take us some time.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 514, I refer to *Programme 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage*, under *National Archives 06: Custody and preservation of documents of the collective memory*. There are targets set for records to be restored and the Minister will agree that this is a national scandal. I understand that the archives are still at Coromandel in a totally inappropriate building. It has been decades since we have talked of moving. I have looked at the Budget on pages 518-19 and I could not find any reference to the *National Archives*. Will the hon. Minister tell us what he proposes to do with all the funds that will be provided to him next year?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, concerning the Archives, definitely we have been talking about it for more than 25 years. It has been there for so many years; many Governments have come and gone and the Archives are still there. Our priority is to make everything digitalised, get it uploaded and then put on the website.

In fact, one and a half acres of land have been earmarked in the Ebene triangle for the Archives. We have not got the funds yet for coming up with the building.

Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage (Rs97,071,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology – Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for Information and Communication Technology was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to page 524, *Overview of Ministry - Strategic Note – Major Achievements for 2010*. The price of ADSL has apparently been reduced. May we know from the hon. Minister why is it that the price of the My T subscribers was not reduced?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: M. le président, comme on a pu le constater, il y a eu une baisse du tarif de ADSL. La presse avait dit 15%, mais nous avons fait plus, c'est 20%. Ça aurait dû prendre effet à partir de l'année prochaine, mais on a voulu que ce soit cette année-ci à partir du 01 décembre.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson : Order, Please !

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: En ce qui concerne le My T, c'est un produit de *Mauritius Telecom*.

The Chairperson: It is a private enterprise and the hon. Minister has no control over it.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Of course, the capacity of My T has been doubled. Comme vous avez pu le constater, M. le président, le tarif...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, please!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The capacity of My T has been doubled.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister has no control over My T, it is a private enterprise. Therefore, we are not concerned with it here. We are with the budget of his Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: There is a *Crime Occurrence Tracking System* which is supposed to be at Line Barracks. May we know from the hon. Minister who are the people who man that Unit, the number of staff and how many cases they have queried up to now?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Justement, le *CIB* est en train de travailler là-dessus et déjà on peut dire que d'ici février de l'année prochaine, ça va entrer en vigueur.

Mr Ameer Meea : On page 531, under item 22030 - *Rent*. We can see that there has been a substantial increase in the rent figure from Rs74 m. to Rs91 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister to give us some explanations on that?

The Chairperson: We take the question of hon. Bhagwan in the meantime.

Mr Bhagwan: I take it on page 661, Mr Chairperson, under the office of the Minister. Can the hon. Minister inform us of the progress concerning the Ministerial Committee, of

which he is a member, on the whole issue of the Business Park of Mauritius Limited and where matters stand?

There have been lots of problems at the Ebène Cybercity area and the hon. Minister forms part of that Committee of which the Chairperson is hon. Bachoo. There are malpractices on allocation of...

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please! I understand there is an Inter-Ministerial Committee working on that.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, Mr Chairperson, there is a Ministerial Committee which is looking into it and it has nothing to do with this. In due course, the hon. Member can come up with a Parliamentary Question.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seetaram, please! Order!

Mr Seetaram: On page 530, *Programme Code 661*, under item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs...*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please! I am getting difficulty to follow.

Mr Seetaram: On page 530, *Programme Code 661*, under item 21111 - *Other Staff Cost*, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to the estimates of 2010 which was Rs953,000 and went down to Rs785,000.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: This is so because no funds have been made available for the year 2011 for vacant additional new posts to be provided.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 528 and I am looking at the outcome, where it is mentioned that : '*Ensure a well managed Ministry which fosters the appropriate environment for the development of a competitive and innovative ICT industry aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens*'.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any particular programme to ensure that the citizens have access to Internet in the different Community Centers? We have been talking about that and I can't find a budgetary line for this.

The Chairperson: The question is whether there is Internet connection in the Community Centres?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, Mr Chairperson, as from January next year, we are coming with 150 computer clubs in all Social Welfare Centers throughout the island.

The Chairperson: Do we have it at Community Centers? This is the question.

The Chairperson: This has been funded by CSR and Mauritius Telecom.

Mr François: On page 524, I refer to Overview of Ministry, with regard to ADSL connection, saturation of the line and high demands in Rodrigues. May we know where matters stand?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In Rodrigues also, there has been a reduction in the price. In fact, we are working under CA sub-marine cables.

Mr Uteem: On the same point, can I know from the hon. Minister when will the LION be fully operational?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, LION-I is there; we have it connected with Reunion Island and Madagascar. Most probably, by July next year LION-II will be available.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 528, *O1: Policy and Management Services P1: Update 3-Year Strategic Plan/Strategic*, I just want some clarification. I would have expected the plan to be completed in December and then an implementation strategy, but here it would appear that we are going to produce a plan in December and then update it six months later and a year later again. I would like some explanations.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, Mr Chairperson, we mentioned it in the Budget. Concerning the NICTSP, the consultants are working on it and the final report will be ready by mid-January next year. Although we have announced it in the Budget, we already are working on it and by mid-January we will get it.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question concerns the targets. The Minister must understand the PPB – are December and then June 2011 and then June 2012 and then June 2013 an implementation plan for updating?

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal, if you have to communicate, please do it outside.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, we have our strategic plan which was for the years 2007 to 2011. Already, we are working on the new strategic plan for the years 2010 to 2015 and this will be ready by mid-January.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, give me a chance to explain to the Minister. I am referring to page 528.

The Chairperson: Please, please! Hon. Obeegadoo, I am sorry!

Mr Obeegadoo: The question has not been answered.

The Chairperson: The question of the hon. Member has not been answered, I can take it, but I am not giving him a chance to explain to the Minister. He puts his question; the Minister is going to respond.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I....

The Chairperson: The hon. Member can rephrase the question. I'll give him the opportunity, but he is not going to explain, please.

Mr Obeegadoo: Certainly! Would our dear Minister explain to us why - according to what is presented at page 528, apart from the plan being, and we are very happy, ready early next year, again in June 2011, there is a deadline, then another deadline in June 2012, and then another deadline in June 2013. Is it the same plan that is going to be constantly updated year after year or is it an implementation strategy that has its deadlines?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: It is an updating of the strategy which is done every year to take on board new challenges.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: On page 525, I refer to *Major Services to be provided for 2011-2013*. I cannot see anywhere where mention is made for one laptop to be made available to each student as promised during the electoral campaign.

The Chairperson: No, I think this is a question of policy. I think we should ask the Minister whether there is any provision in the Budget for that issue, then he answers.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The provision for one laptop for needy children has already been prepared by my Ministry and it is now budgeted under the Ministry of Education.

Mr Baloomoody: It is for a Further and Better Particulars, as we used to say. Are we providing a laptop solely for the needy or a laptop for each and every student as promised by the hon. Minister?

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: It is a question.

The Chairperson: No, I don't know whether the Minister promised. We don't put it as a fact.

Mr Baloomoody: The Government promised. The people believe in what has been promised.

The Chairperson: No, let the Minister respond. If he made a promise, I am sure that he is going to...

(Interruptions)

Order please!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, when you have a look at the Government Programme, you will see it is mentioned 'to the needy students'. We have already worked it out and it is with the Minister of Education to proceed with the necessary steps to be taken.

Mr Baloomoody: What the criteria should be to be defined as needy so as to have a laptop?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, please, I am sorry! The question was from hon. Navarre-Marie whether there is any provision and the Minister answered that there is. It is being under the Ministry of Education. I won't allow any question on that because the budget for the Ministry of Education is over.

Mr Baloomoody: With due respect to your ruling, people rise to the laptop and it's for the needy. I want to know

The Chairperson: With due respect, hon. Baloomoody, you know, it is a question of policy. We are here with budgetary provisions. Please!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, I would like to know what are the criteria, what is meant by 'needy'?

The Chairperson: Can the Minister provide the criteria?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes.

The Chairperson: I am sure the Minister is going to help if he can.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: As I said, the criteria will be worked out by the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Education.

Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Rs8,955,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 662: Scaling Up the ICT Sector was called.

Mr Uteem: On page 531, under item 22030 Rent, may I know from the hon. Minister the reason for the sudden increase in rent and where is the rented property situated?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, we have rented another floor from Belmont building and that's why there has been an increase in the rent.

The Chairperson: An additional renting space. Yes, hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: On page 531, item 22120008 - Fees to Consultants, may we know from the Minister the names of the consultants and the amount paid to each of them?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: We have a long list and I am going to circulate it.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning page 531, item 22120 - Fees, we notice that the estimates for the fees were Rs6,870,000 and has moved up to Rs13,982,000. Can the Minister please enlighten the House as to this increase?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, here also, we have a long list, Mr Chairperson. If you want I am going to circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister about the consultants on the long list,? Is it by tender?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, maybe on the same item, because there are the fees in connection with *IT Security Audit*. Do we have several consultants for IT Security Audit or do we have one consultant. Maybe the hon. Minister can enlighten us? There are also the fees in connection with the *Elaboration of the National Strategy for the BPO sector Development*. Do we have several consultants for these two items?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The tender exercise for IT is under process; the consultancy contract has not yet been awarded and it will be by tender.

Mr Baloomoody: We have just learned that there is a list of consultants. When we ask questions on how they are selected, we are informed that they have not been selected yet. Which is which?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made his point let the Minister respond.

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, we have fees in connection with IT Security Unit; fees in connection with the Elaboration of the National Strategy for the BPO sector Development; fees in connection with elaboration of the national strategy for the BPO sector development; fees for Sky Government policy; fees in connection with information security management standard unit.

The Chairperson: For the names of the consultants, there is a long list and later on the Minister stated that it has not been awarded so far. Which is which? This is the question. Has it been awarded?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: It has not yet been awarded

The Chairperson: What about the list then?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: This is what I said. The National BPO Strategy is funded by the World Bank and it is not yet awarded. The Member wanted the list.

The Chairperson: The list is for what?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: It is for the IT Security Audit. We have Crime Occurrence Tracking, Mauritius MNIC, Immigration and Boarded Control and all that.

Mr Uteem: I note the fees in connection with IT Security Audit. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the audit of highly sensitive Government sites are being outsourced to foreigners or is it done in-house by the Ministry?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: The IT Security Audit is performed to provide an in-depth assessment as to whether there exists sufficient control in the information system to mitigate information. The selection of audit sites is made based on their criteria complexity stage of system implementation.

Mr Lesjongard: On the same item, I do understand that consultants have not been recruited with regard to estimates for the year 2011. At least, the Minister could give us an indication on the name of the contractor with regard to estimates for the year 2010, that is, fees in connection with IT Security Audit which was budgeted for an amount of Rs6 m., and we are at the end of this financial year.

The Chairperson: Do you have it for this year?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: For the year 2010, it was given to Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Mr Ameer Meea: I shall come back to the item rent. The Minister just informed us that some spaces had been rented to a building named Belmont. Can I ask the hon. Minister, since there has been an increase of Rs16 m. on rent item, whether he can give us the spaces rent in terms of square feet rented and the price per square foot?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Regarding rent of building, we have rental for Air Mauritius Building, it is Rs79,935 monthly; the total area is 8,100 square feet. We have first floor at Straton Court where the total area is 2,895 square feet, the rent is Rs66,585. We have for the Central Informatics Bureau and Finance Section, an area of 4,466 square feet and the rent is Rs110,000.

The Chairperson: For the new building?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Then we have for Belmont also.

The Chairperson: Yes, for Belmont.

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: For Belmont, it is 4,450 square feet and the rent is Rs110,000 monthly.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 531 item 31132102 - *Mauritius National Identity Card and Projects*, I see the sum of Rs200 m. is earmarked. Can we have some details, please?

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: The consultant for this year?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: In fact, you will see it is for Mauritius National Identity Card. The Government has initiated procedures for that. A sum of Rs20 m. is only for advisory which has already started and as from next year, it is Rs200,000 which means advisory plus the implementation of the process.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we know whether the firm has already been selected and if so, what were the criteria used for the selection of the firm with regard to identity card?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: The consultancy services have already started and it is on a Government to Government agreement with Singapore which has delegated the Crimson Logic to do it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mrs Labelle: On the same item, we have heard that there was a sum of Rs20 m. for advisory - I think I heard this word. May we know whether the sum of Rs20 m. has been spent and to whom this amount has been paid? Who was the consultant and who were the advisers for this project?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: The payment has not yet been effected.

The Chairperson: I take two questions. I take one from hon. Seetaram first.

Mr Seetaram: At page 531 item 31122802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment, (a) Equipment related to Exchange and Sharepoint Servers, (b) Servers and Other IT Equipment for Upgrading of the GOC*, we see a sum of Rs37,500,000 and Rs90 m. flat. Can the hon. Minister inform the House in relation to that increase and what does it constitute of?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: It is for acquisition of IT equipment, that is, equipment related to exchange and sharepoint servers, servers and other IT equipment for upgrading of GOC. The Government of Mauritius has signed a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft for a period of five years as from 27 June 2008 and a provision of Rs25 m. has been made for the financial year 2011 for the procurement of surveys and software for the implementation of sharepoint servers and exchange which are available under the Enterprise Agreement.

The Chairperson: Two more questions; one from hon. Uteem, and one from hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Uteem: On this very issue which the hon. Minister just answered, the increase in the server is Rs90 m. I understand that this has been criticised by the Director of Audit. What has been done to return the licences because these are not being used? Can we get a

set-off with Microsoft and get new licences for other products which the Government will use. Apparently, this software is not being used.

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: In fact, the licence will expire in the year 2013 so far as I can recollect and already we are using it. The licence is valid up to the year 2013, as I said.

Mr Baloomoody: My last question is very clear and I expect a clear answer. Can the Minister inform us how much public money has been spent up to date on the project for the Mauritius National Identity Card? We have had so many replies. It is not clear whether we have paid consultants. May we know, up to date, how much taxpayers' money has been spent on that project?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: I cannot state precisely, but it is around Rs3 m. to Rs 5.

Programme Code 662 – Scaling Up the ICT Sector (Rs600,064,761)) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues: Programme Code 751 – Policy and Strategy for Fisheries and Rodrigues was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 537, the first item *Launching of the National Plan of Action* which was in September 2010. I refer to the indicators and the targets on page 540 and I note that none of these targets refer to implementation of that plan of action.

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the National Plan of Action, it was launched to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. It was prepared with the assistance of Norad Norway and launched on 03 October 2010. The measures described in the plan are being implemented in order to combat IUU fishing and one fishing vessel flying Mauritian flag was denied unloading in August as it contravenes Section 36(2) of the Fishing and Marine Resources Act of 2007 for fishing with an expired licence.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, at page 543, under item 22130002 - *Surveys (a) Fibre Optic Cable for Rodrigues and (b) Feasibility Study*, funds are provided for the coming financial year. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he will report progress about the preliminary works which have been carried out concerning these two projects?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning studies and surveys in connection with the IFAD/MARS project, a sum of Rs1 m. was earmarked to cater for feasibility study for possible options to connect Rodrigues with the information highways, presentation of a Segenet project has already been made by the Ministry of ICT to the RRA. With regard to the

feasibility study for new runway for Rodrigues, a sum of Rs4 m. has been earmarked for the feasibility study of the Airport Development Project which will comprise, among others, a new runway of 2,100 metres length for the short-term with a possibility of extension to 3,000 metres.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, can the hon. Minister report progress pertaining to the feasibility study and say whether the tender has been launched?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, tender has been launched for the feasibility study and, not later than one week back, one contractor has been chosen for this.

(Interruptions)

They have just chosen it.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 537, I will come back again on the National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing. On the same page, *Programme 487 – Fisheries Development and Management*, third bullet, *implementation of the National Plan of Action against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing*, can the hon. Minister lay a copy of this National Plan on the Table of the Assembly and can he also tell us about the Fisheries Master Plan which is being formulated now? Can he also give us an idea who is working on this Fisheries Master Plan, whether there are any experts, his Ministry, and when will this Master Plan be completed?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the National Plan of Action, I can table it. Concerning the Fisheries Master Plan, we are already working on that. We will have *les assises de la pêche* early next year, and from then on, we are going to work according to that.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 543, under item 22160 - *Overseas Training*, I see a reduction. Can the hon. Minister explain this reduction? Is there a planning done as far as overseas training for the personnel of the Administration of Rodrigues is concerned?

Mr Von-Mally: For overseas training, the amount earmarked is for the exposure of staff and fishers to foreign expertise in the field of policy and planning for the sustainable development and Management of the Fisheries sector.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the Fisheries Master Plan, does the Ministry hold a register of fishermen and how many fishermen are there for this sector?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning overseas training, the decrease in provision is to be within ceiling allocation. It is to be noted that most of the training programmes are funded by the international organisations, like the NORAD, IOC, IOTC, Japan and so on.

Concerning the number of fishermen, we have 2,480 in Mauritius and 1,981 in Rodrigues which makes 4,461.

Mr Ganoo: At page 538, I refer to *major constraints and challenges and how they are being addressed*, the last bullet referring to *low fish catch rates of lagoon artisanal fishermen*; my question is linked to the previous answer given by the hon. Minister concerning *Empowerment of artisanal fishermen by encouraging them to fish off lagoon for higher catch to derive more income*, I was going to ask the Minister the number of artisanal fishermen that we have, but he has already given the answer which is about 2,400. This figure has been dwindling all throughout the years and now we have only 2,400 lagoon fishermen. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether these artisanal fishermen can be encouraged to fish off lagoon as most of them are very old people who have reached nearly 60 years...

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo put the question, please!

Mr Ganoo: Is there any plan as this has been mooted in this House very often in the past to compensate these old fishermen because the Ministry does not provide any fishing card to the younger generation anymore?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, we are working seriously on that and it will be catered for in the Master Plan. We know that there are too many old fishermen in the lagoon and we are trying to remove them by giving them an appropriate compensation. For that, we have to work together with them and to see how much we can give them as compensation.

Mr Lesjongard: The Minister has mentioned the lagoon fishermen, can he give us an indication on the number of fishermen now engaged in off-lagoon fishing?

Mr François: On the same line, Mr Chairperson, if the Minister could give us an indication of the number of in-lagoon and off-lagoon fishers for Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Von-Mally: For Mauritius there are 1,500 off-lagoon fishermen.

Mr Barbier: Coming back to page 537 concerning the fish auction market, I know that the project is ongoing. May I know from the Minister how much we will receive from foreign countries? Can we know which country and how much is being funded by Government? What is going to be the total cost of the project and the expected date of opening of the market?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning Rodrigues, there are 600 off lagoon fishermen. For the fish auction market at Fort Williams, Les Salines, the building is presently under construction and it is expected to be ready by January 2011. Cold rooms and associated equipment for the fish auction market are due to be commissioned by mid 2011; electronic and auctioning equipment are also planned to be commissioned by mid 2011.

Modalities for the operation of the fish auction market are being worked out in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Mr Barbier: I also asked about the funding of the project. How much was funded by which foreign country and how much was funded by Government?

Mr Von-Mally: Rs25 m. from Greece and the total cost is Rs58 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question concerns the National Plan of Action for large net fishing. I would like to know where matters stand, how many fishermen are still involved in large net fishing and what the National Plan of Action provides, being given that it is 15 years since we introduced the phasing out programme?

Mr Von-Mally: There are 16 fishing net permits. In Mauritius there are too many. There are five gill nets and 133 fishers working with it. But, we would like to phase this out slowly, but surely. We are going to work on that in the Master Plan because there are too many net permits still in operation in Mauritius. In Rodrigues, we have only 7.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, what does the National Plan of Action say as to that?

Mr Von-Mally: The National Plan of Action concerns all fisheries with focus on 144. In fact, the National Plan of Action does not directly concern large net and gill net.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the large net fishing, can the hon. Minister ...

The Chairperson: Which page are you referring to?

Mr Lesjongard: I am on the same item that hon. Obeegadoo asked a question. I just wanted to confirm whether there has been an increase in the number of licences over the past five years?

Mr Von-Mally: No.

Programme Code 751: Policy and Strategy for Fisheries and Rodrigues (Rs41,602,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development and Management was called.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 543, I refer to item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultant* and item 22120028 - *Fees for Laboratory Test*, may I know who are these consultants? Are they to be appointed? Where the tests will be performed and in which laboratory? Under item 22150 - *Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies*, there is a sum of Rs400,000. Is it the local laboratory of the Ministry? Is it accredited? We would like to know which company will provide the security services as well as the cleaning services.

Mr Von-Mally: The consultants are chosen by IFAD and screened by the Ministry according to the terms of reference. Concerning the security contracts, we have Swift Security Guard Ltd., the RSL Security Services Ltd, the Smart Security Services Ltd, and Keep Pace Security Guard Ltd.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 544, under item *28213007 - Other Current Transfers-Fishermen Investment Trust*, can the hon. Minister tell the House whether the value of the shares allocated to the fishermen since the Trust was set up has increased?

Mr Von-Mally: The Fishermen Investment Trust (FIT) has got one off capital of Rs15 m. in July 2007, and there are 300 shares of Rs10 each allocated to fishermen. There are 12,480 fishers in Mauritius and 1,981 in Rodrigues. If the hon. Member wants, I can circulate the information. In fact, we are revamping the FIT.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, concerning page 544, under item *28225 - Transfer to Private Enterprises (a) Purchase of fishing boats (Mauritius), (b) purchase of fishing boats (Rodrigues) and (c) New Scheme for off lagoon Fishing*, could the hon. Minister explain to the House the exceptional increase from Rs8 m. to Rs32 m. concerning the purchase of fishing boats? Can we know how many boats? Concerning the new scheme for off-lagoon fishing, what is this new scheme?

Dr. Sorefan: On the same item *Transfer to Private Enterprises*, can we have a list of all those private enterprises?

Mr François: Will the hon. Minister tell how many fishing boats have been purchased in 2010 under item *purchase of fishing boats (Rodrigues)*, the cost per boat, and whether they are semi-industrial ones?

Mr Von-Mally: Considering the transfer to private enterprises, there is an increase in provision due to overlapping of funds over the two financial years.

Concerning the purchase of fishing boats, capital transfers, there has been acquisition of four boats for semi-industrial fishery. With regard to the purchase of fishing boats in Rodrigues, there has been the purchase of a small fleet for the cooperative society, to exploit the FAD fisheries resources. It involves a new scheme for the off-lagoon fishing.

Mr Ganoo: I will come back to page 540, *Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development Management; formulation of appropriate policies and strategies for sustainable development and conservation of aquatic resources and the environment*. Several fishermen associations have complained to the Ministry about numerous problems. One of them is the Fishing Aggregate Devices (FADs), which are, unfortunately, being damaged with the course

of time and so on. This creates a lot of difficulties for the fishermen. Can the hon. Minister say whether this problem has been attended to?

As far as the conservation of aquatic resources is concerned, where has the marine environment ecosystem monitoring been effected, as mentioned in the strategic note? It is said that the marine environment ecosystem monitoring has taken place on different sites. Can the hon. Minister table a list of the sites which have been attended to?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, there are 23 Fish Aggregate Devices that have been installed around Mauritius. The damaged ones are replaced within two weeks. We do it fairly rapidly.

The Chairperson: I will allow two more questions; one from hon. François and the other one either from hon. Mrs Labelle or hon. Barbier. Just decide between you two! We take the question of hon. François first.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, I come back again to this item 28225008 (c) *New schemes for off lagoon fishing*, on page 544, which is not quite clear.

Secondly, with regard to part (d) *Aquaculture project (Rodrigues)*, there is a provision of Rs6 m. for 2010. So far, I haven't seen any aquaculture project going on in Rodrigues. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us about this?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the marine ecosystem, there are 56 established sites monitored for both water quality and ecosystem.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 541, *P1: Production of baby sea cucumber seeds*. I link that to page 544, item 28225008 - (d) *Aquaculture Project (Rodrigues)*. I see there is no budgetary allocation for 2011 forward. There was a sum of Rs6 m. for this current year, and nothing for the three coming years. There is a projection of 3,000 and 5,000 baby sea cucumber seeds for 2012 and 2013. I would like to know whether this forms part of the aquaculture project, and whether there is any particular firm in Rodrigues which is engaged in the production of sea cucumber.

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the aquaculture project in Rodrigues, there is a pilot project for seaweeds in the pipeline, and we are doing that in collaboration with the Mauritius Research Council. We have also started the cultivation of sea cucumber on a pilot project. Concerning the firm, it is done by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly itself. We are doing it in consultation with the Mauritius Research Council.

Mr Ganoo: On page 541, under *services to be provided - Competent Authority - Seafood Hub, 09: Certification of fish and fish products*, can the hon. Minister confirm whether our laboratory has not yet been accredited, and the certificates issued by our laboratory for export of fish and fish products are, in fact, not valid? I am wondering why

this is in our estimates. Can the hon. Minister also elaborate on *P1: Number of Rapid Alert Systems (RAS)*?

Mr François: Coming back again to the seaweeds and sea cucumber culture project, may I ask the hon. Minister where these projects are being carried out in Rodrigues?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the competent authority, there is on-line certification in the pipeline; laboratories are being accredited and the equipment is being obtained from EU. Concerning the aquaculture project, as far as I know, there is one project that has been earmarked at Baie du Nord. We are, in fact, working in close collaboration with the RRA. I think this question should have been put at the RRA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, a last one, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 545, under item *31113012 - Dredging of Boat Passages*, the hon. Minister is aware that this is of critical importance to fishermen community. I want to know what the Minister proposes to achieve next year with a mere sum of *Rs10.8 m*. Linked to that, on page 540, *04: P1: Fisheries Management Plans for lagoon and off-lagoon developed*, will deal with dredging as well and this is to be published in December 2012. Is there a way we can expedite this matter?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the rapid alert system for fish and fish products, the competent authority has consolidated its control prior to all exports of consignment of fish. There has been no rapid alert system.

Concerning the dredging of boat passage, the sum has been earmarked for the dredging of boat passage at Remy Ollier with a view to alleviating problems of fishermen who are encountering difficulties to navigate during low tide. The preliminary procedures for implementing the project have already started. The preliminary drawings are being worked out by MPI and, once drawings are obtained, clearances will be sought accordingly and the tendering exercise will be set in motion. Retention money for the dredging of the Remy Ollier boat passage is about *Rs 8.6 m*. A boat passage will be dredged at Mare Chicose.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 543, under item *22900903 - Awareness Campaign (MPA projects)*, can the Minister inform us as to what form the campaign will take?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the awareness campaign of the marine protected area, it is under the UNDP GEF project, because it is equivalent to *350,000 USD*. The consultancy cost is: *Rs8 m.*; awareness campaign: *Rs5 m.* It is a total of *Rs10.5 m.*

Programme Code 487 – Fisheries Development and Management (Rs332,282,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 311- Rodrigues Development was called.

Mr François: I refer to page 537, *Overview of Ministry*, under *Programme 311: Rodrigues Development*, where it is said ‘Provide specific support and coordination to deliver set goals by RRA’. With regard to the adverse Director of Audit’s Report 2009 on Rodrigues, may we know from the hon. Minister if any special mechanism has been put into place to monitor and control judicious use of public funds and good governance by RRA, mainly for funds invested in the hundred percent private-owned companies of the RRA?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the Rodrigues Development, in fact, this programme is for support and coordination to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the implementation of the following projects, namely, the extension of the runway at Sir Gaëtan Duval Airport and connection of Rodrigues to Mauritius via the fiber optic cable. Does the hon. Member want to know something more on the item?

Mr François: It is quite clear and simple. In fact, I asked if any special mechanism has been put into place to monitor and control judicious use of public funds and good governance by RRA, mainly for funds invested in the hundred percent private-owned companies.

Mr Von-Mally: Of course, there are.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, given the remarks contained in the Director of Audit’s Report 2009 on Rodrigues, and given what is said at page 538 on *Programme 311: Rodrigues Development*, that is, the Minister –

“Acts as a coordinator for the RRA to enable the Assembly to fulfil the missions efficiently in accordance with its statutory obligations and ensure that funds earmarked in the budget are channelled accordingly and used in a judicious and effective way.”

For the funds we are voting under this programme, may we know what programme does he have to ensure the effective use of funds?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, there are so many measures that this warrants a long answer. I can circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to page 541, *Programme 311: Rodrigues Development, under 01: Follow-up on the execution of budgetary measures and implementation of projects approved by the RRA*. Now that Rodrigues has its autonomy and they approve their projects, may we know what mechanism Mauritius has to follow these projects approved by the RRA?

Mr Von-Mally: I said that I am going to circulate the information. In fact, this is what hon. Obeegadoo just asked me.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is clear. Rodrigues has an autonomy: it sets its budget and decides on the projects it wants to do. Does Mauritius still have a hand on the projects approved by the RRA? Do we still have control over these projects from here?

Mr Von-Mally: We just assist in the disbursement of funds because Rodrigues is autonomous.

Mr Baloomoody: They are autonomous; they approve their budget and projects. Now that we are informed that there is some control from here, may we know whether it is a control or assistance? If it is assistance, what type of assistance?

Mr Von-Mally: Well, we assist in the disbursement of funds. The staff of the Department of Audit also goes to Rodrigues frequently. In fact, there is a liaison between the Ministry of Finance and the RRA.

Mr François: With regard to annual reports of the hundred percent owned companies by the RRA...

The Chairperson: Which item is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr François: Page 537, *Rodrigues Development*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether all these annual reports have been tabled as per the recommendations of the Director of Audit, if not when?

Secondly, on the same line, will all RRA's companies continue to be subsidized directly or indirectly?

The Chairperson: No, this is a question of policy.

Mr Barbier: On page 545, under item 26 *Grant*, may I know whether the Minister will consider, for the information of Members of the House, the possibility of circulating a copy of the detailed budget of the RRA?

Mr Von-Mally: No problem! I think we already have one at the Library. To answer hon. François, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is informed that there is no direct subsidy to private companies of RRA and I would like to table the budget for Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. François!

Mr François: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on item 26321001 - *Capital Grant: Rodrigues Regional Assembly* at page 545. Being well aware that provisions for Rodrigues have been scaled down from what was voted by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and now, from my mathematics...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr François: The total sum for capital over and above the Rs360 m. is Rs541 m. Will the hon. Minister give us details of his priority list for capital projects under the Rs360 m. to know where funds will be invested for judicious use?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, it is not for me to give the priority list because Rodrigues is autonomous. In fact, it is up to the RRA to re-prioritise their projects depending on the funds that are available, depending on the budget that is available.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 541, *O1 P2: Number of major projects on which assistance and support are provided to RRA*, five projects appear to be earmarked for year 2011. May we know what are these five projects?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, the five projects are: the Airport Project; provision for modern health infrastructure at the main hospital, area health centres and new medical equipments, ambulances, dialysis apparatus, etc.; construction and upgrading of sports infrastructure; construction of football playgrounds and volleyball pitches; construction of public gardens at Baie Lascar and Baie du Nord, and the construction of new roads and upgrading of existing ones.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, as the hon. Minister said, it is up to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to decide its priority list.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must put his question.

Mr François: Yes. The Minister just tabled a copy of the RRA budget where, I understand, a sum of Rs608 m. has been requested. Now, being given that a sum of Rs360 m. has been earmarked in the national Budget, do I understand that the RRA has to come up with a new budget in the RRA?

The Chairperson: No, this question is not allowed. Last question from hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Looking at page 545 under this programme, there is a decrease in the amount budgeted for *Goods and Services* for next year and also for compensation of employees. May we have some clarification as to why that is so?

Mr Von-Mally: The decrease is due to the transfer of staff to other Ministries and abolition of the post of Executive Assistant.

Concerning *Goods and Services*, the decrease is due to reduction in the consumption of electricity.

Programme Code 311: Rodrigues Development (Rs1,610,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We'll suspend the sitting for one hour.

At 7.53 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.05 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative reforms – Programme Code 301: Civil Service Policy and Management was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, looking at page 552 and the Summary of Financial Resources, one notes that the budget on *Programme Code 301* has an exponential increase from Rs16.9 m. to Rs78.9 m. Would the lucky hon. Minister kindly explain how this is?

Mr Gungah: In fact, the increase is due to a new premise that the Ministry will be moving to, and it is meant to meet rent, utilities, office equipment, furniture and other expenses for the renting of the new premises.

Mr Ameer Meea: Which building?

Mr Gungah: We do not know yet where the building will be situated because action has been initiated to launch tenders.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, coming to page 550, the *Strategic Note* and the *Major Achievements* of the Ministry and the major point here is for the country to have a modern and efficient Civil Service to help the growth of the island. But in these major achievements, firstly, the documents refer to the targets set by Government for the Performance Management System; yes, the target has been reached. Can the Minister give us an assessment, up to now, of this system?

Secondly, can he tell us why so far only 1100 officers have been sensitised in regard to the Code of Ethics?

Thirdly, in the Budget Speech the hon. Minister announced the setting up of a high level committee to establish a national policy to guide human resources planning and allocation in Ministries, departments and across the public sector. I see no mention is made of that in the strategy for the Civil Service. Can the hon. Minister tell us the composition of this high level Committee? Has it already been set up? What are its terms of reference?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, concerning the Performance Management System, I must say that the target set is achieved, and officers have a clear sense of direction and through the key tasks agreed upon know what is expected of them individually. They better appreciate their contribution towards the overall mission of the organisation.

Concerning the 1100 officers, in fact, the sensitisation is an ongoing process for all public officers and it is done normally by the distribution of the Code of Ethics which has

already been done to most of the officers. It is also under Ethics online corner and for the 1,100 officers, it concerns the formal training modules.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I refer the hon. Member to page 550 to *Compliance with the provisions of the Occupational Safety & Health Act 2005*. According to the budget, it is a major achievement for the year 2010. May I refer the hon. Minister to the next page 551, *Major Constraints*, where the provisions of the Occupational Safety & Health Act 2005 are not being complied with? May I know what are we talking about? Have we complied or have we not complied? Is it an achievement or not?

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Member made his point.

Mr Gungah: Concerning the high level Committee, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms have already met twice and they will continue to meet. The high level committee has already been set up.

Mr Chairperson, on item of Safety and Health Audits, in 2010 the Occupational Safety and Health Unit has carried out 272 audits and inspections in various Ministries and departments.

Mr Baloomoody: Are we complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2005 or not? If we are complying and it is an achievement, congratulations! If we are not, we are not!

Mr Gungah: Yes, we are complying because in most of the Ministries and departments and work sites, the section has already been set up. There are a few departments where it has not been set up and it is going to be set up very soon.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 556, *Programme Code: 301*, item 22060 *Maintenance*. There is an increase in maintenance from Rs185,000 to nearly Rs3.2 m. Can the Minister give us some details about it? The provision for the cost of utilities is from Rs 400,000 to Rs 5.4m. May we know what are the utilities? I will then come back to page 551 *Major Constraints*...

The Chairperson: We stop to these two for the time being.

Mr Gungah: Is it item 22060 *Maintenance*, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Gungah: In fact, for maintenance, the estimates have increased because of maintenance of vehicles which is Rs150,000; maintenance of IT equipment at Rs3,000,045 and this sum is to meet costs of repairs, maintenance, servicing and upgrading of computers and other IT equipment and also to maintain the software required and includes the provision of data points and cabling works with the moving of officers to the new building. We have also the maintenance of furniture, fixtures and fittings which come to Rs60,000.

The Chairperson: Can the Minister reply to item 20010 - *Utilities*, the first one under heading *Goods and Services*?

Mr Gungah: In fact, this is to meet payment of electricity and telephone bills; electricity for the new building: Rs3 m., telephone bills for the new premises: Rs2.4 m. In fact, expenditure under this item will be centralised under Programme 301 in 2011.

The Chairperson: We give hon. Obeegadoo a second chance.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will come back to the question I asked at the very beginning about the increase in funding. I was told it is because the Minister is moving to more comfortable quarters. I note, on page 556, that the personal emoluments, compensation of employees also, are experiencing a massive increase. Would the hon. Minister care to explain?

Mr Gungah: Personal emoluments?

The Chairperson: The first two items.

Mr Obeegadoo: Page 556 *Programme 301 – Civil Service Policy and Management*, item 21 - *Compensation of employees*, there is a 50% increase from Rs14 m. to Rs21m.

Mr Gungah: First of all, I would like to inform the House that we are not shifting to a new building in order to have more comfortable office. In fact, we are shifting because right now many departments of the Ministry are housed in different buildings and to have a better control, we are shifting in a place where all the departments will be there. Concerning the personal emoluments, provision is required to meet payment of salaries, increments, extra remuneration, acting and responsibility allowance and end-of-year bonus to officers working for this programme during the fiscal year 2011. It also includes the creation of one post of Senior Chief Executive, 10 posts of Assistant Secretary, two posts of Financial Operations Officer, two posts of Procurement and Supply Officer, and one post of Internal Controller Officer and one post of Executive Officer.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have nothing against, but I just want to explain, this is most unusual; from one year to the next, to go from one AS to 11 AS.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, put your question in the meantime!

Mr Ganoo: I hope the Minister is listening to me. Page 551 *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed – With a view to reduce the time taken for recruitment, Ministries/Departments have been requested to proceed with the filling of posts which do not entail major amendments to the Schemes of Service. Moreover, the procedures for prescribing Schemes of Service are being re-examined with a view to proposing a reduction in the processing time*. We shall remember that in the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance at paragraph 264 said –

“We are providing Rs426 m. to fill 3,586 promotional posts, and hire an additional 2,076 staff.”

The question I want to ask the hon. Minister is, firstly: what are these new procedures for prescribing Schemes of Service for recruitment as far as the 3,586 promotional posts are concerned?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is under which item?

Mr Ganoo: I am on page 551 under item *Major constraints and Challenges* concerning recruitment and promotion. I am not referring to all the 3,586 promotional posts. In terms of the higher grades, how many PAS have been acting as PS for three or four years? How many AS have been acting as PAS? Can he give us a breakdown of the figures in the grades of PAS, PS and AS?

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, I just remind you that we have to stick to our timetable.

Mr Gungah: Concerning the creation of posts of Assistant Secretary which hon. Obeegadoo asked, in fact, these posts are being created because there was no SCE previously in the Ministry. For the post of PAS, AS, concerning the promotion, in fact, according to information I have, it concerns the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is concerned with only the general services.

Mr Obeegadoo: I just want it to be clear. The Minister is telling that we are going from one AS to 11 AS in the space of one fiscal year, just because there was no SCE.

Mr Gungah: In fact, these 11 AS will be in different Ministries.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, I am addressing, of course, to the Minister of Civil Service. One of the main concerns of the public with regard to the service of the Civil Service is the lack of code of ethics. May I refer the hon. Minister to page 550, *Major Achievements for 2010 – The Code of Ethics for Public Officers has been updated and published and 1,100 officers have been sensitised*. If you look at the same list, there are around 49,000 officers. Does he call that an achievement?

The Chairperson: The Minister explained that it is an ongoing process and a question was put on that issue by the hon Member and hon. Ganoo.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is: what is the target? Out of 49,000, we have reached only 1,100. Will it take 49 years?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, unfortunately, the hon. Member was not here when I answered that question, but I said that it is being done in different ways, that is, the Code of Ethics is sent to all the officers. We have got the ethics on line corner and there is a formal

training module. Concerning the 1,100 officers, they are formally trained and this is an ongoing process, but the Code of Ethics booklet is distributed to all officers and they are well aware of the code.

The Chairperson: One last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: We all have questions on Programme 301. I wanted to ask the Minister concerning *Major Constraints and Challenges*, the issue of *Lack of expertise and need for funds to evaluate Performance Management Systems*, where is this addressed in the Budget for next year under Programme 301?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, in fact, my Ministry is seeking assistance under the Technical Assistance Programme for consultancy services to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the system in place.

Programme Code 301 – Civil Service Policy and Management (Rs78,991,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 302 – Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 557, item 22120 Fees, may we know to whom we are paying fees, who are the beneficiaries and for what advice are the consultancy fees being paid?

Mr Gungah: The fees are paid to accessors and facilitators of ISO Projects, for consultancy services, for mystery shopping and also for training.

Mr Baloomoody: Are these people being paid these fees and are these organisations private or public? Can the hon. Minister circulate the list so as to save time?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 554, I am impressed by the very sexy terminology used: mystery shopping and exit interviews. Forgive my ignorance, but may I be enlightened as to what mystery shopping and exit interviews are?

Mr Gungah: In fact, Mr Chairperson, mystery shopping is an innovative initiative that has been introduced as from August 2007 to evaluate the level of service, delivery of public service organisations from the point of view of customers who benefit from the service.

Mr Obeegadoo: This issue was raised earlier in a different manner by hon. Ganoo and hon. Baloomoody. At page 553, under Programme 302, O1, P1, the number of people to be sensitised to the Code of Ethics was 1,100 this year, 1,200 next year, 1,400 the following year and 1500 in 2013 until, as hon. Baloomoody said in 49 years everybody is sensitised. However, at page 551, I am astounded by what I read on the major constraints. I don't know whether hon. Dr. Jeetah, who is not here, has seen this -

“The number of officers targeted for training through Open Distance Learning (ODL) has been revised down as the MCA is not certain about its future in the context of the Open University Mauritius Project.”

We know very well that the Open University will take on all the ongoing programmes of the MCA; this is logic. That cannot be an excuse to bring down the number of officers to be trained. On this Code of Ethics, may I suggest international organisations to have online programmes which they need to take and obtain a certificate proving that they have taken it, answered the questions, and submit themselves to a test? Can I urge the hon. Minister to revise these targets so that as soon as possible we have attested assurance that our civil servants are dedicated people who are fully trained in terms of Code of Ethics?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the number is not going down. It is increasing. The hon. Member is talking about 1,100. It concerns those who have been sensitised formally on the Code of Ethics, but training is an ongoing process in the Ministries for all levels of officers and even if the future of the MCA is not sure, I again assure the hon. Member that different avenues are being explored so that training may carry on in an increasing way.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Chairperson, at page 550 concerning the Code of Ethics, can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the new items that have been included in the Code of Ethics for Public Officers?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, in line with the *Maurice Ile Durable* and in view of latest developments, the revised Code of Ethics for Public Officers includes three new areas, namely, the prohibition by law of smoking and consuming alcoholic drinks at the workplace, the adoption of a green behaviour and the conduct of officers during pre-election period.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, I will come back on this question of formal training. At page 553, under Programme 302, may we know from the hon. Minister what is the duration and the number of hours of this formal training? At the same time, Mr Chairperson, if I go to page 557, there are studies and surveys. May we know from the hon. Minister which studies and surveys and whether the surveys have anything to do with major constraints at page 551? I think hon. Ms Anquetil talked about that. We are told here that we need to carry out an exercise and so on. Can I know whether the surveys and studies include a remedial measure to this major constraint?

Mr Gungah: Concerning the formal training, it lasts for about two to three days and concerning the surveys, training and capacity building, it is training of staff following mystery shopping, but this is done where gaps are identified.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 557, under item 22120 - *Fees*, an amount of Rs6,750,000 has been earmarked. Can we be provided with information as to whom these fees are payable? Secondly, concerning current grants to international organisations, can we have an idea of which organisation the Ministry is affiliated to?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is a corporate Member of CAPAM, that is, the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management. The fees amount to Rs125,000. These are approved fees to the Mauritius Standards Bureau and to facilitators in respect of ISO Certification during the fiscal year 2011.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister who are these facilitators and how are they recruited?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 553 on the same programme, precisely on the number of Ministries and Departments to be ISO Certified, I see the figure for 2010 is: 20; 2011:20; 2012:20 and 2013 it is 20 again. Can the hon. Minister explain, firstly, so far what are the Ministries and departments that are already ISO Certified? Can the hon. Minister table the list? Why has his Ministry shown so much lack of ambition by keeping the figure 20 for the next three years? Is not this in contradiction with the concept announced in the Budget about promoting excellence and rewarding performance in the civil service?

Mr Gungah: Concerning the assessors, Mr Chairperson, they are trained public officers. Regarding the ISO certified organisations, I can circulate the list. In fact, it is kept at 20, because it is the target set for each year, but we can go beyond it.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 553, *Programme 302: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service, P2: Facilitate the delivery of high quality services in Ministries/Departments*. There was a target of 7 for 2010. May we know what are these Ministries or Departments which now give high quality services, and whether the 7 Departments, which are being put for 2011, have been identified and which Departments they are?

Mr Gungah: To come back to what hon. Ganoo was asking, the figure 20 that has been set is, in fact, 20 new organisations for each year, depending on the size. It may take up from four to nine months for a department to be ISO certified.

Concerning the question of hon. Mrs Labelle, I have a list which I can circulate.

Programme Code 302: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service (Rs 15,606,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building was called.

Mr Ganoo: Regarding *O1: Induction programmes for new recruits* and *O2: Training of officers* on page 554, can the hon. Minister tell us how these induction programmes for new recruits are carried out? So far, there is no civil service college which was announced in the past. Which is the organisation which is conducting the induction programme for the new recruits?

Mr Gungah: Induction courses are organised for new recruits in the grades of Safety and Health officers, Word Processing Operators, Office Care Attendants. As for the different types of training courses, the list is long, and I prefer to circulate it to the House.

Mrs Labelle: On page 554, I am taking *P2: No of Public Officers to be trained on Distance Learning mode (ODL)*. May I know whether it is the MCA, a local or an overseas organisation? On page 557, item *22160 - Overseas Training*, here too, we have an increase from Rs900,000 to Rs1.5 m. Can I know whether there are new sectors in which we are sending the officers?

Mr Gungah: These trainings are overseas ones, and there is an increase because the amount is meant to meet the cost of subsistence allowance and air tickets for officers to attend seminars or workshops, training abroad, especially where partial costs of participation are met by the donor agencies or institutions. These trainings relate to management development courses, and are meant mainly for officers in the administrative cadre.

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Minister to page 557, item *22120 - Fees*. Again, there is a sum of Rs5,000,000 for this year, and Rs6,750,000 for next year. May we know for what purpose it is and who are the beneficiaries? Who are those who are providing these services?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, there is an increase in this item, which is meant to cater for the consultancy services for the feasibility study of the setting up of the Civil Service College, which is Rs1 m., and the amount also includes the cost of training, fees for resource persons, fees to UTM for award courses for Higher Executive Officers, Executive Officers and Confidential Secretaries. Provision is also made under this item to sponsor officers of the HRM cadre for diploma courses.

Mr Baloomoody: We are talking about fees and not about people who are on the establishment. When we have fees, I take it that there are people who are outside the establishment. May we know who are those people getting these fees?

Mr Gungah: They are not in the establishment, and that is why it is called fees.

The Chairperson: Who are they?

Mr Baloomoody: Who are they, and how are they selected? How do they qualify to have a specific amount other than their salary?

Mr Gungah: The resource persons are the serving officers, retired officers, academia and resource persons from the private sector.

Mr Baloomoody: Can the Minister circulate a list of all those who are benefiting?

Mr Gungah: Yes, of course.

Mr Ganoo: On page 550, *Programme 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building*. Again on the training of officers, mention is made in the estimates about the Public Service Training Centre, as enunciated in the Government Programme 2010-2012. The Minister answered a question about a Civil Service College. Are we talking of two different things, or has it been renamed as Public Service Training Centre?

Mr Gungah: It is the same thing.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start with the same issue of Civil Service Training Centre. Is it still the idea that Government will be the provider of training, or will this be outsourced through competitive bidding, and where are the funds to support this found in the Budget?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, as at now, the Commonwealth Secretariat will provide the Ministry of Civil Service with the services of a consultant from Singapore for the feasibility study, in order to set up the training centre. The details are quite lengthy concerning the Public Service Training Centre or the Public Service College, and if the hon. Member agrees, I can circulate all the details.

Mr François: I am referring to page 554, *P1: No of Public Officers trained annually based on request*. May I ask the hon. Minister why we are not talking about a continuous progress development for all officers from a well established programme?

Mr Gungah: In fact, it is a continuous training programme, which goes on in the whole Civil Service.

Mr Obeegadoo: I see under the staffing provisions that the Minister is lucky to have more than three additional posts. What is interesting is that there is a new director of training, a new director presumably of training and then there is the trainer proper so, only three technical staff, in fact, for this whole programme with very ambitious objectives. May I ask what will be the qualifications of these three persons to be recruited? How are they being recruited? Are they being recruited in-house from the general administrative cadre or are they being recruited from the outside on a contractual basis, and whether the scheme of service has been approved and, therefore, what will be their role?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, as I said, my Ministry will have the services of a consultant from Singapore for the feasibility study of the training centre and discussions will go on, not only with the Singapore consultants, but also with the Commonwealth Secretariat to set up the college and, of course, the scheme of duties. These posts have been created to cater, at least for the initial stage, in the setting up of the college.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 554, Mr Chairperson, under item *O2: Training of officers P2: No of Public Officers to be trained on Distance Learning mode (ODL)*, may we know what is the nature of the training envisaged, whether this relates to the Code of Ethics or is it something different and who will be the provider of such courses?

Mr François: On the same item, does that Distance Learning mode extend to Rodrigues officers under the Rodrigues establishment?

Mr Gungah : The courses concern leadership and, of course, customer related courses. Rodrigues, of course, forms part of the Republic of Mauritius and all the civil servants are on the same boat.

Mr Obeegadoo: The second leg of my question was: who will be the provider of the courses, of the training? Mr Chairperson, while the Minister is waiting, I'll attend to another question. Under item *P3: No. of Officers of General Services Cadre to be trained annually (Award Courses)*, does this mean sponsorship of officers of all the different Ministries to be sent to the University of Mauritius or abroad for training? What is meant here when we have a hundred and ten officers to be trained for next year?

Mr Gungah: Concerning details of the award courses, Mr Chairperson, these are organised for Higher Executive Officers, Executive Officers and Confidential Secretaries. It is in line with the recommendations made in the PRB. All the details and figures are with me and I can circulate them to the House. For the moment, MCA will provide the training in answer to the last question which the hon. Member asked.

Mr Ganoo: I am still on this point of training of public officers. Under *Programme 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building, P1: No of Public Officers trained annually based on request*, can I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten us about this 'on request'? On whose request are the public officers trained annually? Is it at the request of the Ministries, of the public officers themselves? Can I link this question to the question of improved service delivery? We all know that the main problem is how to make the civil service become a customer-oriented service and what are the efforts of the Ministry to improve service delivery in the civil service?

Mr Gungah: Normally, the requests are made by Ministries and Departments. Concerning the second part of the question, I think it is related to improvement of counter services. Is it that?

Mr Ganoo: To improve service delivery in order to enhance service performance to the citizens.

Mr Gungah: To improve service delivery, courses on customer care are provided.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I need some help from the hon. Minister. I just want to reconcile two facts. At page 554, *Programme 303: P2: No of Public Officers to be trained on Distance Learning mode (ODL)*, the Minister has answered that the training will be ensured by MCA and then on page 551, it is being stated that the number of officers targeted for training through Open Distance Learning (ODL) has been revised down as the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) is not certain about its future. If on one side, we are taking MCA for this course, there are other service providers. That's why I am asking this question.

Mr Gungah: In fact, MCA is continuing to provide the training till the Open Distance Learning absorbs MCA.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 557, general expenditure on *Programme 303*, item 22120 *Fees*, which seems to explain the increase in the overall budget. Why do we have this quite significant increase from one year to the next on fees?

The Chairperson: This question was put by hon. Baloomoody. It is the same question.

Programme 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building (Rs22,850,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme 304: Human Resource Management was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 558, under item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*, we can see that there has been an increase of more or less Rs34 m. and I shall go to page 560, under *Staffing Positions*, we can see that the number of staff under *Sub-Programme 30401: Management of Human Resources* has decreased by 65, that is, from 538 to 473. Can the Minister explain why this substantial increase in relation to the decrease in staff?

Mr Gungah: In fact, there has not been any decrease in the number of officers because out of the figure, there are 70 officers who are being posted to other different Ministries. Concerning the Personal Emoluments, these are to meet payment of salaries, extra remuneration and responsibility allowances, end-of-year bonus for all officers working for this programme. It also includes the filling of vacancies for one post of Assistant Secretary,

10 posts of Manager Human Resources, 11 posts of Assistant Manager Human Resources, 23 posts of Senior Human Resource Officer, 65 posts of Human Resource Officer. The list is very long.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, under *Sub-Programme 30402: Occupational Safety and Health...*

The Chairperson: Which page?

Dr. Sorefan: On page 558, item 22060 *Maintenance*, can we know why is there such a huge amount of Rs24 m. for next year?

Mr Lesjongard: On page 558, under item 31122802 *Acquisition of IT equipment for Electronic Attendance System*, I see that an amount of Rs4.3 m. is earmarked for the year 2011. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication in which Ministries, Departments or outstations have this system being installed and whether the system will be centrally monitored at the level of his Ministry?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, concerning item 22060 *Maintenance*, in fact, under this item, provision has been made for the implementation of Enhancement Programme for the improvement of the working environment.

The Electronic Attendance System has been implemented in two phases. Phase I comprises of Ministries and Departments situated in the new Government Centre. Phase II which is a new system, is equipped with both proximity cards and biometric registration of attendance and it has been implemented in 50 sites. My Ministry is currently extending the system to additional sites.

Mr Baloomooody: On page 558, under item 22120 *Fees*, may I know for what purpose we are providing such a huge sum of money? Who are the beneficiaries and who are cashing such a huge amount?

Mr Gungah: It is to meet expenditure in connection with the running of the following training programmes. Firstly, we have got the First Aid courses where there are six batches of 20 participants. Secondly, there are the refresher courses in First Aid.

Mr Baloomooody: My question has not been answered. Who are the beneficiaries and who are providing that service?

Mr Gungah: I have the list, Mr Chairperson, and I can circulate it.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 558, under item 22070 *Cleaning Services*, I see that the sum of Rs10,000 has been increased to Rs2.5 m. Can we know why this increase and who is the contractor?

Mr Gungah: In fact, there is an increase because, as I just said, provision is required for the implementation of enhancement of work environment. It is a new item in the Budget and it is as from now that we are going to work in order to enhance the working environment of all Ministries and Departments.

Mr Nagalingum: Can we know the service contractor?

Mr Gungah: We are still working on it. The item is new in the Budget and discussions will be carried out in the Ministry to take decisions.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, there is also the item of maintenance. Under the previous programme, the hon. Minister informed us that the maintenance includes expenses for enhancing the environment and so on. Here, the maintenance is from Rs30,000 to Rs24 m. Under which item are we putting the cost of enhancement of environment?

Mr Gungah: In fact, the Enhancement Programme is under the item maintenance.

Mr Ganoo: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, but in a different manner, I am referring to page 555, Sub-Programme 30402: *Occupational Safety and Health, enhancing the working environment of public officers for a safer and healthier workplace*. I can see in P2: in the sub-programme *Percentage of Implementation of the Enhancement of the Work Environment Programme*, in 2011 it is 10%; in 2012 it is 20%, and in 2013 the target is 30%. By the end of next year, we shall hope to achieve only 10% of the workforce. Can the hon. Minister tell us what are the constraints and why is such a low figure, only 10% of our civil service workforce will be covered by the programme of enhancement of working in a better environment?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, as I just said, it is a new item that is in this budget. It all depends on the financial resource and capacity for implementation. It is a project that is going to start very soon. So, it depends on the financial resource that will be provided to.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am still on the question of maintenance on page 558, under item 22060 *Maintenance* which amounts to Rs24 m. The hon. Minister has talked about the enhancement of Work Environment Programme. Can he enlighten us on some components of this enhancement programme of environment?

Mr Gungah: Concerning the enhancement of the work environment, this item has come following visits that have been carried out with different Ministries, where major shortcomings were found out. The hon. Member wanted some examples: they are upgrading of building, cleanliness, pest control, ventilation and temperature control, sanitary convenience, etc. I have the list which can be circulated.

Mr Obeegadoo: We are still on *Programme Code 304*. On page 555 *Sub-Programme 30402: Occupational Safety and Health 01* and P1: *Number of safety audits in Ministries/Departments to be carried out by December*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the budgeted amount for next year in respect of this target addresses the issue of asbestos. Do we now have a comprehensive survey of all the Public Service buildings to guard against the adverse effect of asbestos?

Mr Gungah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I can assure the hon. Member that it is so.

Mr Obeegadoo: The last one relates to the unit, the staffing of which is described at page 561. As far as I am aware, this unit was created because the Factory Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour could not carry out inspections in the public sector. As opposed to the Factory Inspectorate, I cannot see any training sessions, sensitisation of public servants to health and safety risks. My question is: in terms of effectiveness of spending of public monies, what coordination is there – exchange of experience, of training - between the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of Civil Service Affairs and the Factory Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour?

Mr Gungah: In fact, the Ministry of Labour has a right to visit the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs.

Mr Obeegadoo: What coordination is there in terms of training sensitisation programmes?

The Chairperson: One last question! Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to that enhancement of work environment programme, since we see over the period of three years the increase is by 10%, can we have an indication from the hon. Minister what is the total value of that programme?

Mr Gungah: The total value for that programme is around Rs32 m.

Programme Code 304: Human Resource Management (Rs242,520,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industry and Employment – Programme Code 541 was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer the hon. Minister to page 563, *Major Achievements*. There have been apparently 620 inspections covering 663,616 workers. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this number of workers include foreign workers?

Mr Mohamed: Yes, they do.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I know whether there have been any contraventions taken against the treatment of foreign workers?

Mr Mohamed: I cannot say exactly the figures of the contraventions for foreign workers, but if the hon. Member wants the figures, I can have it circulated. I gather that the 42 contraventions that have been established maybe do include foreign workers, I cannot ascertain that at this time. I will circulate it.

Mr Obeegadoo: On Programme 541, I see that 28 Remuneration Orders were amended and the two ROs of the Sugar Industry were also amended. Is it still the practice of the Ministry to constantly review ROs, if so, by virtue of funds budgeted for 2011, which ROs are to be reviewed, and if the Minister can tell by now, what percentage of our labour force is covered by Remuneration Orders?

Mr Mohamed: I do not have the exact figure with regard to the percentage. I can circulate that as well, but yes, it is still the practice. I understand that the hon. Member was Minister of Labour, but it is the practice today that the National Remuneration Board does review the ROs. We are in the process of an exercise to look exactly what are the ROs that have not been reviewed for a very long time. This is a survey which we are carrying out at the Ministry. Once we have carried out and finished the survey, we will exactly know where we situate ourselves in order to send to the National Remuneration Board, ROs that must be reviewed, because there was, for instance, recently, an RO that had not been reviewed for more than 15 years and it was sent to the NRB.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same item, *Major Achievements*, concerning inspections carried out at workplaces by Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors, not only the work place of the foreign workers is concerned, but where they reside is yet another problem. The places are most deplorable without amenities and it causes a lot of harm to the reputation of Mauritius. Can the Minister inform the number of inspections made during the past year and whether owners of building has been taken to task and even sent to court? Can the Minister inform us how many cases, if he has gone through this file, have been drawn to his attention? If I am not mistaken he, himself, made some site visits which have been largely advertised and the worst comments made on the owners, not only of the buildings, but also of the factories.

Mr Mohamed: As regards the issue of site visits, I totally agree with the hon. Member. There were site visits carried out by myself, but there are regularly a lot of site visits carried out by the officers of my Ministry and, yes, I must admit that initially, there were huge problems with regard to the lodging accommodation. But, however, let me explain the problem. The definition of workplace in our legislation does not include the accommodation of the worker, be it foreign or local, and that is why we have gone through a

process of, first of all, coming up with a lodging accommodation regulation pursuant to the main Act which is the Occupational and Safety and Health Act. It has already been sent to the State Law Office and it is almost finalised. We are going to come up with that regulation that will put order with regard to the implementation of the powers that our officers have to go to the site visits and take remedial measures. With regard to how many site visits that have been carried out at the place of work of foreign workers, I can circulate that figure.

Mr Baloomoody: I am sure the hon. Minister would agree that to consider it an achievement is probably a bit too much when we have one case of child labour detected. The hon. Minister would surely agree that there are many cases of child labour around. Can I ask the hon. Member whether there is a unit in the Ministry to look about the issue of child labour, especially now, in the economic situation we find ourselves in Mauritius today, child labour is becoming an activity. To come and say that it is an achievement and to have one case of child labour is a bit too much! Can I know whether there is a unit and a specific budget to ensure that children are going to school and not being used as workers?

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the Ministry of Labour liaising with the Ministry of Education whose figures tell us that more than a third of children between 12 and 15 are not in schools and, therefore, are out there somewhere most probably working?

Mr Mohamed: The first question of hon. Baloomoody with regard to whether it is an achievement or not, that one case of child labour was detected. I totally agree with him that it is not an achievement; maybe there is a misunderstanding somewhere. It is not an achievement when there was one case of child labour. The achievement is that we recognised it and we found it. Now, to come back to hon. Obeegadoo's question, yes, we are liaising; the hon. Minister of Education and myself and our Ministries do work together because ,as you will realise,` very often you have a lot of children that do not go to school and, very often, they work with their parents during school hours, for instance. There is a synchronisation between our Ministries in order that we may address this and that we also may sensitise. To come back to hon. Baloomoody, there is not one specific budget, but it is the duty and responsibility within our budget in order to address this particular issue which, I totally agree, is a very important issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: On this issue of Programme 541, the Minister will agree with me that under the PPB, all the Ministries have a first programme on policy and management and all Ministries appear to have some sort of a White Paper, strategic plan and Action Plan. This is the only Ministry that has neither a sort of White Paper to state its vision on general policy

nor an Action Plan in terms of enhancing the effectiveness of its services. Why is that, although we have significant money budgeted for next year?

Mr Mohamed: What I would like to say with regard to the excellent question which is put by hon. Obeegadoo is that we not necessarily proceed by way of a White Paper or any other colour of the paper in terms of pursuing the strategy and division of enhancing the services we provide. But what I can tell you, for instance, is that we are in January finalising the decent work country programme that will also include the National Employment Policy and there will be the Regional Director of Africa, Mr Charles Dan, who was only in Mauritius last week, and who would be in Mauritius again in January for the signature of a very important document. Yes, we have not proceeded by way of White Paper or otherwise, but we have moved forward. We also have a lot of issues which we are working on and we have started consultations altogether. Another issue amongst many others which you will allow me, Mr Chairperson, to mention is our wish and our commitment to enhance our Ministry of Employment; for instance, the way that it is working where you have a lot of people who just have a card stamped out and then they go home. We are trying to change the system where we are trying to give accompaniment, personalised service to the unemployed, the job seeker. We are not proceeding by a White Paper or otherwise, but we are moving forward. I can assure the House of that.

Mr Ganoo: To pick up from where the hon. Minister has left, in order to create more harmonious industrial relations and also, in terms of *Programme 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment* which talks about supporting employers in creating a safe, conflict-free workplace, can the hon. Minister enlighten us on an announcement which he has already made in this House about the amendments to be brought to our Labour laws? I have heard him also publicly saying that he is working on that project, but can he tell us, for the moment, as at now, what are the main areas where changes will be brought?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, as an experienced Parliamentarian and as the past Minister, I cannot confirm the changes that would be brought at this particular stage, but I can say at least the changes in the areas that are being contemplated. At the moment, what I can say is that...

The Chairperson: Briefly!

Mr Mohamed: Briefly, we have already prepared a draft. The draft is ready and there is a High-Powered Ministerial Committee that is working on it at the moment. We have a meeting tomorrow at 14.00 hours and we are coming to finalise our stand and, a very important issue is, for instance, one of the element - since I have to be brief, you will

understand - is the contractual issue. Whether someone can repeatedly employ someone on contract and just break the contract for 28 days so that the worker does not end up having local leave, sick leave or end-of-year bonus. That is one of the issues that we would like to address and working on.

The Chairperson: I put the question?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, I have as many questions as you would allow me. I ask to Programme 541, interestingly at page 463, I read the fourth bullet as referring to the National Tripartite Forum which was supposed to be set up. The regulations were being finalised until the Ministry of Finance deemed it was too late to be of any use or purpose for discussion of compensation. My question is - this is not made an operational objective in terms of indicators and targets - when will this National Tripartite Forum be fully operational, its regulations and compositions and subcommittees finalised so that the principle of tripartism is re-established in our contract?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, once again, I thank the hon. Member for the question for it gives us an opportunity to set the records straight. The National Tripartite Forum, I am happy to announce, has already being set up approximately three months ago. We have already had two meetings already, the first meeting of the umbrella body of the National Tripartite Forum; the members of the employees and the trade unions were there. I have two co-Chairpersons with me plus myself as the Chairperson of the National Tripartite Forum; we have had a second meeting with the trade unionists with regard to the possibility of discussing for them to come back to this negotiation table to explain to them about the discussion paper that had to be discussed and it was negotiations, obviously; that is what the discussion paper means. Other committees also have already been set up, but I would like to just say that it is being set up administratively. You will understand that it has already been set up and its work has already started as far as one of the salary compensation subcommittees is concerned and, obviously, early next year, we are going to be attaining our top speed. I am sure about that.

Programme 541 – Policy and Management for Labour and Employment (Rs21,608,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme 542 – Labour and Employment Relations Management was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to item *Labour Office at Curepipe?* May we know where matters stand?

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Item 31112001 - *Construction of Buildings: (a) Labour Office at Curepipe.*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, as regards the Labour Office at Curepipe, I am sure the hon. Member does remember that I am informed...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Please, proceed!

Mr Mohamed: Now we also know that it is hon. Obeegadoo and Baloomoody!

(*Interruptions*)

With regard to the building in Curepipe, it is an excellent project of the Ministry. It is almost over and I am informed that there is approximately a sum of Rs1.8 m. in retention money that must be paid out to the contractor and hon. Baloomoody did, I believe, visit my predecessor as legal counsel for the company which is...

The Chairperson: There is no need to go that far. The Minister should answer the question. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under Programme 54201, there is *O2: Settlement of complaints made at Labour offices*. I see the target for year 2010 is 33%. We have the problem of one trade unionist at the MBC/TV. That complaint was made at the office. It is a case which the hon. Minister knows perfectly well. In fact, Professor Torul was commissioned to put some order and to enquire what happened.

(*Interruptions*)

He was commissioned to make an investigation. Before the report is official, can we know from the hon. Minister what is the latest position of the Ministry in that particular case and whether that report...

The Chairperson: Is it a supplementary question or is it on an item of the budget?

Mr Bhagwan: On an item, Mr Chairperson. *O2: Settlement of complaints made at Labour offices.*

The Chairperson: No, this is a question of administration.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister...

(*Interruptions*)

The Member is not the Speaker!

The Chairperson: I will not allow that question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: But the hon. Minister is going to reply.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No, I am the one who decides whether the question should be allowed or not!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, I understand that there was a question put and the hon. Minister did agree that we will give free legal services to workers who are being sacked and who have a case before the Industrial Tribunal. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision has been made in this budget and if so, on which item, and if we are giving legal advice as from when? Is it only to Court or up to the time where they are suspended for the disciplinary enquiry?

Mr Mohamed: At this moment in time, as the hon. Member is aware, legal advice and legal assistance is indeed provided by our Ministry to all the workers of this country and I even ask them very often that there is no need to go and see a lawyer. I am really sorry about that, but it is free here. We can go to the Industrial Court. With regard to provision, it is under *Extra Assistance*. This is what I am informed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to page 567, *Sub-Programme 54202: Occupational Safety and Health* with regard to *O1: Enforcement of legislation pertaining to Safety and Health P1: Number of inspections carried out at workplaces*. I see that for the year 2011 some 2500 inspections are targeted as compared to 1500. Does the hon. Minister really feel that he will achieve that target when within that section no additional staff has been requested?

Mr Mohamed: I believe the hon. Member - correct me if I am wrong - is referring to Sub-Programme 5202 with regard to the number of inspections. The target, indeed, for year 2010 was 1500. Achievement as at September 2010 was 1855. I do understand what the hon. Member - I will say my friend - is getting at. But I can assure him that the very fact that we have gone past and beyond the target 1855, we can take it upon ourselves to achieve even a higher target of 2500 for year 2011. I must here take this opportunity to say that the officers of that department are doing a fantastic job.

Mrs Labelle: I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether there is a special team for building sites. We are well aware of the several accidents which have occurred on building sites. May we know whether there is a special team for visits on building sites?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to Occupational Safety and Health and building sites, we have in that particular department, a Director, a Chief Occupational Safety and Health Officer, and also an engineer. So, obviously, whenever a particular ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, would you not mind to just giving the answer. Whether there are visits?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, you are right.

Mr Ganoo: I come back to page 566, *Programme Code: 542 Employment Relations, Rate of settlement of complaints* at the level of Labour offices. On the same issue that my friend, hon. Bhagwan, rose, but not on the same line, the rate of settlement according to the Ministry's figures is as follows: 33% for year 2010 and the percentage targeted for the next two or three years are from 33%, we will move to 35%, and year 2012, it is 37%, and 40% in year 2013. Does not the hon. Minister think that this is on the low side, settling only a third of the cases that comes to his Ministry? What is the problem? Is there any staff constraint? Why is it not possible, because we know that dispute between employers and employees are settleable easily?

The Minister is a lawyer; he has been practising at the Bar for a long time. Why this figure of 33%? I consider it to be quite low.

Mr Mohamed: I will try to be brief, Mr Chairperson. True it is that I believe that 33% is quite a very honourable figure. Very often, when a case is not settled at the level of our Ministry, it is referred to the Commission for consideration on mediation or the Industrial Court. What I may say is that the issue is not one of staff. The problem has never been one of staff. I feel sorry to say that the problem is sometimes basically we don't want to settle cases. They know how to settle cases, they also know how not to settle cases and I have spoken to the human resource professionals whereby I have asked them not to be simple employees of a company, but they have to act as professionals. As you will see here in the major achievements, out of 6835 complaints cases registered at the Labour office, 5290 cases have been disposed of and we have recovered Rs31,313,960 in favour of workers. Also that 566 court cases, including criminal cases, have been disposed of and a total sum of Rs 24,118,380 has been recovered in favour of workers. I think once again those officers are doing a fantastic job.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your brief answer!

Mr Barbier: At page 573, pertaining to staffing, under Programme Code *18461 Senior Labour and Industrial Relations Officer*, I see that we are asked to vote for an additional eight more officers for this year, moving from 23 to 31 officers this year. Can we have some explanations as to the reason?

Mr Mohamed: There is the need for more inspections and, in fact, there will be promotions and that is why we have to provide for it. I am sure the hon. Member understands, it is our commitment, our responsibility and our duty to carry out more inspections and have the staff as such as senior members and give them the promotion.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 566, *O3 P1: Sensitisation of workers and other stakeholders on their rights and obligations. Number of persons covered in workers education sessions*, we have a figure of 2,000 for this year and there is a target of 2,200 for next year. May I know from the hon. Minister where are these *workers education sessions* being held? How do we go with these sessions?

Mr Baloomoody: What programmes are we doing with regard to foreign workers? Do we have a specific unit to inform the foreign workers about their rights, the labour law in Mauritius?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, there are two issues. Firstly, with regard to the sensitisation of workers on their rights and obligations, I am happy to announce that our target was 2000 and we achieved as at September 2010, 3381. Once again it is above targets. Very often, workshops and seminars are regularly organised by the IECD of the Labour Division. Sessions are carried out both in-house and in enterprises by officers of the Ministry. With the coming into force of new labour legislation recently, additional seminars and workshops had to be organised in 2010 for workers, trade unions as well as employers.

To come to the question of sensitisation of foreign workers, I am at the moment together with my officers reviewing the Recruitment of Workers Act to make it an imperative, a mandatory element, that workers coming to Mauritius be sensitised at the port of departure, before they even come to Mauritius, for them to feel more secure.

The Chairperson: Last question from hon. François!

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I have to go to page 566. May I ask the hon. Minister whether anything has been worked out during his last visit to Rodrigues with the Rodrigues Labour Office with regard to settlements of complaints? I know cases where workers from private sector are not being paid since two or three months and are running around the bush at the Labour Office for months in Rodrigues.

Mr Mohamed: As you will realise that *l'autonomie veut aussi dire, M. le president, que* there is a Labour Officer there under the control of the *Assemblée de Rodrigues*, but what I have done, during my visit there is to offer a capacity building and I have even gone further than that. I have also asked that the Regional Assembly does pay, at least, for one of our officers to go there for a period of time to assist them particularly in many cases concerning construction companies and also in the case of one company which is Mauritours. They need our assistance and we are ready to help. I can assure you.

Programme Code 542 – Labour and Employment Relations Management (Rs129,493,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 543 – Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds was called.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the Registrar of Associations, one of the main complaints that we have is that - in fact, I am sure the hon. Minister will agree, he has been practising at the Bar for quite long - we have to go to the Judge in Chambers for every issue regarding members of Associations. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is being done at that level to ensure that the Registry of Associations itself is equipped, well manned to ensure that, due to conflicts between members of associations, they don't have to go before a Judge in Chambers, because many associations cannot afford to do it. What budget has been identified for that issue?

Mr Mohamed: I personally do not believe that the issue will be simplified by an issue of budget. That is why at the level of the Ministry, before I became Minister, my predecessor had already started work with the officers of my Ministry to work on amendments for a new Bill for the Registrar of Associations, as my hon. friend is aware of. I believe that would sort out the problem *dans le fond* and not superficially. I clearly understand; I believe the hon. Member has a point there, and this issue is being addressed, I can reassure him.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 571, *Programme 543: Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds* concerns the registration also of Superannuation Funds. Can we know how many Superannuation Funds are in the register and does the Department have people who are qualified in pension management to be able to monitor these Superannuation Funds and control them effectively?

Mr Mohamed: What are the Code and the item?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: It is on compensation of employees. The question is: the Ministry is regulating and registering Superannuation Funds. How many Superannuation Funds are concerned on the register and does the...

The Chairperson: I think that this does not concern the budget of the Ministry.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: We want to know if there is anybody qualified in pension management to be able to monitor and control the Superannuation Funds.

The Chairperson: Does it concern the staff there?

Mr Mohamed: Actually the good news is yes, we do have the qualified personnel. I have a list which I'll circulate gladly to the hon. Member.

Mr Obeeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, this is a very small unit handling a very large volume of work. Will the Minister consider the suggestion to include on page 567, that is, Indicators and Targets for next year, a customer survey? I think this would be very relevant in this case, as to the feelings and opinions of the clients, the trade unions, the associations and as regards the advice, because this unit tenders whatever advice, the service it renders.

The Chairperson: Yes, I think that the Minister can ponder on that issue for next year.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, but let me, Mr Chairperson, just thank the hon. Member for his excellent suggestion.

Programme Code 543 – Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds (Rs 18,343,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 544 – Employment Facilitation was called.

Mr Ganoo: Sir, I come to page 568, *Programme 544: Employment Facilitation O1: Placement of jobseekers, including laid-off workers seeking employment*. May I remind the hon. Minister that the hon. Minister of Finance talked about the setting up of a Support Unit for re-employment of employees (*SURE*) in the ERCP and also in the Budget speech? Why no mention is made of that *SURE*? Is Government now not too sure about *SURE*?

The Chairperson: I think the hon. Member is getting contaminated with the Minister. Please, be short!

Mr Ganoo: My second question is: is the hon. Minister aware that, once laid-off workers bring their employers to court and, in case they lose their case in court, they are not given any help by the Ministry in terms of placement since they have entered a case and sued their employer for unjustified dismissal?

Mr Mohamed: Could the hon. Member please repeat the last part?

Mr Ganoo: The second question: is the hon. Minister aware of the fact that employees who have been laid-off for any reason – restructuring - once they have brought their employers to Court and, in case they lose their case, are disqualified from being given any help for placement of job?

Mr Mohamed: Actually, this is not the information that I have. In actual fact, I must say that I am pretty happy that I helped. Our assistance is going with regard to those workers who have lost their jobs, for instance, for economic reasons. With regard to the SURE, let me just reassure the hon. Member that on the *Programme 544 item 31132*, we have the Support Unit for re-employment of employees, and what is provided for in the Estimates of 2011 is Rs525,000. I must say here, as spelt out by the Government, focus action will be taken to support enterprises in difficulties and to redeploy laid-off workers. The SURE team will be equipped to register laid off workers, record vacancies available and match the workers to the vacancies. In spite of economic downturn, hundreds of vacancies are available. At this moment, there are approximately 4,000, as I have said, and we are sure, and I reassure the hon. Member.

Mr Uteem: On the same issue, may I know from the hon. Minister how will SURE work in relation to the Welfare Programme that had been set up under the Employment Rights Act which is supposed to do the same thing, that is, training and providing places for people who have been laid off?

Mr Mohamed: The new way that we are going to work is that it would be a closer support in the recruitment drive. Workers will benefit from this unit as they will be put in rapid touch with potential employers. All available vacancies will be put at their disposal so that they will have a wide choice. Let me just say in conclusion, since I have to be brief, what we are trying to do here is being placement oriented. Instead of having the old way of doing things, what we are doing now is for a closer accompaniment and a placement oriented strategy. This would work very well, and I am sure it is going to work very well.

Mr Baloomoody: I take the hon. Minister to page 568, *O2: Granting of work permits to foreign workers*. He said that he will take around two weeks. Can I ask the Minister whether, when we grant permit to foreign workers, we do differentiate between a local company and a foreign company? If a foreign company wants to bring foreign workers, do we ask for *certificat de moralité* and, if not, why not? Do we insist for this certificate for a local company? My second question is: whether – we say we will grant work permits within two weeks – inspection is being done with regard to accommodation and all the social

services we have to give to each and every worker. Is it done equally for foreign workers within foreign companies and for foreign workers within local companies?

Mr Obeegadoo: Concerning the very same issue, I am going to ask the same question because there is prior inspection of contracts as well. Is it not done by the Ministry? Can I link the question asked by my colleague, that is, the mention of a review and modernisation of work permit system as mentioned on page 572? How are we going to do that in parallel and deliver within two weeks?

Mr Mohamed: To come to the first question, in actual fact, we, in no way, ask for Certificate of Morality, be it for foreign or local. I can assure the House that we do not discriminate and I will see to it that this is so, but I know we do not discriminate. That is the guideline between local and foreign companies and the same system is used.

As regards the question that is being put to by hon. Obeegadoo, what I would like to see is for us to go faster and we are even thinking - and I, personally, am thinking - about the possibility of basically giving a permit post and then doing verification post, but all verifications are being done within the two weeks at this moment.

Allow me, Mr Chairperson, to say that, unfortunately, sometimes the Minister does not sign the document on time, that's why it may take a bit more but, otherwise, we are trying to revamp the whole system, streamline everything down in order that we may give the permit much faster for foreign or local companies and all of them equal.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I request the hon. Minister to ensure that foreign workers, especially those coming for foreign companies, do get a Certificate of Morality? We do not have to have HCs to be dumped in our country as foreign workers; we should ensure that they do bring to Mauritius, foreign companies especially, people of good character.

The Chairperson: It is a question of policy.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, I thought the question which my colleague also asked was: how we were going to reconcile this attempt to go even faster with the need to ensure prior to delivery of work permit, that the contracts have been inspected, as the Ministry already does, and the living conditions, since now there are going to be regulations under living conditions prior to issue of work permits?

Mr Mohamed: It is two weeks as from the moment in time that all documents have been deposited. It is not basically two weeks from the time of application, but it is two weeks as from the time that all documents are in order.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 572, *Programme 544: Employment Facilitation*, under item 31132401 *Review and Modernise Work Permit System*, may I know from the Minister if he

can consider, before giving work permit to dental surgeon or medical people, that the Ministry consults the Dental Council or the Medical Council before giving the permit, because

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: It is a question of policy.

Dr. Sorefan: ... we have a lot of problems; people are coming to the Dental Council with a work permit and they cannot get their registration.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Mohamed: May I just briefly answer? I am sure the hon. Member will be all smile to hear that the Dental Council is consulted.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 568, *Programme 544: Employment Facilitation*, under 03: *Granting of recruitment licences to private local agencies*, can I know from the hon. Minister the number of recruitment agencies in Mauritius and whether they are required to sign a bond which can be forfeited in case there is any default?

Mr Mohamed: Before I get to hon. Uteem, allow me to go to the issue of Dental Surgeons. I must say that they are given three months to register with the Dental Council. They have to submit their registration certificate but, otherwise, the Dental Council is present in the whole system.

As regards the list of recruitment agents in Mauritius, the regulation do provide for a bond; it is provided under the Recruitment of Workers Act and the regulations thereto. The figures are there. I have a list of all the recruiting agents that are there, but let me underline the fact that, at this moment, we have not started delivering permits to recruiting agents based in Mauritius, bringing workers to work in Mauritius, as the hon. Member must be aware, but we are starting to do it. The law is already there and we should do it.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 572 under item *31132104 Enhancement of Employment Service*, (b) *Support Unit for Re-employment of Employees*, which is a new Unit under the ERCP, may we know whether that unit has been set up and how many employees are deployed to that unit?

Mr Mohamed: We have already started working on the system according to my information. That is why we have provided for January 2011 and as from January 2011 it would be ...

(Interruptions)

Before we do anything we have to prepare it, because if we do not prepare it, it will fail. Basically, once we announce it, we prepare it and we do it.

Mr Baloomoody: Coming to the foreign workers, it is a fact that our image has been tarnished.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: In the regional area, with Madagascar...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is simple. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether we have a unit at the Ministry to ensure that those who bring foreign workers in Mauritius not only give a guarantee their return ticket, but also their compensation? Just as we have done for the new Chairman of Air Mauritius, he has worked there for three months, he has got his guarantee and he is going. At least, they go back home, not only with an air ticket, empty pocket, but at least with their compensation. Would the Minister see to it that those who bring foreign workers to Mauritius guarantee their minimum compensation with regard to severance allowance?

Mr Mohamed: May I inform the hon. Member that I was not at all involved as regards compensation for the Chairman of Air Mauritius. He did not come and see me for that. With regard to the foreign workers, yes, there have been certain problems. The hon. Member is right. Now, to say that our image has been tarnished, let us agree to disagree, because I would not say that the glass is half empty, I say it is half full. The fact is we are a proactive Government, we are doing what needs to be done, it is a positive image. I can guarantee the hon. Member of this House, Mr Chairperson, that we, at the level of the Ministry and I, as Minister, will never see to it that someone's work permit is cancelled or in any way sent back, unless and until, his dues are paid to him and he is someone, at least, who is paid what he is owed before he is ever made to leave, never before.

The Chairperson: One last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 572, under item 31132104 (a) *Upgrading of Labour Market Information System*, for which item there was nothing budgeted last year and a significant amount for this year, I wanted to ask the Minister which sectors are covered and what he is proposing to do in this respect. However, I want to link this to what I read on page 564 in terms of the *Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. It is said that:

“ Dependence on other institutions for the completion of actions undertaken (prosecutions, collection and compilation of statistical data, etc.) results in delays in

processing of work permits as well as settlement of complaints with respect to industrial relations issues.”

May we know how, with this difficulty in mind, he proposes to review and upgrade LMIS?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, the difficulty is, in fact, nothing else, but a challenge which we are ready to meet. In fact, it gives us the impetus to go forward. I have a list in my own brief and annex with regard to the LMIS and issues referred to by the hon. Member, my learned friend. To avoid giving a long answer, may I just circulate it?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Programme Code 544 Employment and Facilities (Rs66,476,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney General’s Office - Programme Code 561 - Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer the hon. Attorney-General to page 577 concerning *Retention of staff and lack of professional staff*. May I know on which item of the Budget have we allocated the sum to ensure retention of staff and to make sure that we have the best professional at the department?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, it is not an item. On the agenda we have highlighted the major constraints that we have and we are given the reason as well. But there are incentives that are being given to the officers at the level of the office.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue, the objective is, of course, very ambitious; the quality legal advice, the simple and clear drafting and the constraint which is emphasised are problems with staff. There is lack of staff and retention of staff and yet looking at the Budget, the financial resources are more or less the same from one year to the next which would indicate a drop in real terms and a very slight increase in terms of staffing. An increase in staffing relates to Procurement and Supply Officer as far as I can see and not to do any drafting work. How does the hon. Attorney General propose to address the constraints he has identified during the next financial year with those resources available?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I think that the hon. Member has got the whole thing wrong. I refer him to page 584, Sub-Programme 56201 where provision is made for the post of State Counsel, the number is 20; Deputy State Attorney: 1; Senior Legal Assistant and a number of other posts have been earmarked for the forthcoming year.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Attorney General should not get us wrong. We have much respect for the officers of this office, coming from the first...

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! Will you be minded not to enter into arguments, please? The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not entering into arguments. When I look at page 579, it states the increase in law officers, they attend to court mostly, and to enhance the system of law justice and human rights within the rule of law. My question is whether we have a unit. Let alone the unit which advises, drafts, goes to court, do we have a specific unit which *fait la propagande* for the human rights, be it at schools level, workers' level, university level and the members of the public?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, the Attorney General's office is a service Ministry and it is clear in the Programme – *provides essential expert support services to the Government in the maintenance and improvement of Mauritius system of law, justice and human rights within the rule of law*, that is, we provide support to the Government to do that.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 581, under item 21 - *Compensation to employees*, I can't see any item for training of or providing for drafting purposes.

Mr Varma: It is under the other programme, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 581, under item 22120 - *Fees*, a sum of Rs1 m. is being budgeted for next year. May I know who will be the beneficiaries of this scheme and to whom these fees are being paid?

Mr Varma: These fees will be for training, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: May I know who will provide the training and training of whom?

Mr Varma: It will be for the training of law officers, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: Which officers?

Mr Varma: Officers of the Attorney General's office.

Mr Baloomoody: This Attorney General's Office is a specific office which must have specialised persons.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: Will it be for the training of lawyers?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Baloomoody, you have put your question.

Mr Varma: For Barristers and Attorneys at the Attorney General's Office, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, at page 581, under item 22030 - *Rent*, there is an estimate of Rs1,625,000 for 2010 and it has risen to Rs1,750,000 for 2011. Can the hon. Attorney General enlighten the House as to why there has been such an increase?

Mr Varma: It is an increase in rate, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, let me come back to this point raised earlier. We welcome training for the staff.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Who is to dispense this training and these fees we are approving...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually we have earmarked a budget for that item and as we go along the year, there are courses being dispensed for drafting and team building. This will be done in the course of the year.

Mr Baloomoody: As we are going in specialisation, can I refer the hon. Attorney General to page 577, *Major Services to be provided for 2011-2013*. We are going to have 'Quality Legal Advice to Ministries and Departments on domestic, regional, international and constitutional issues, on draft legislation and interpretation of legal documents.' Who is going to provide that training?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Do we have these experts in Mauritius? Will they be sent abroad?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! Order! Hon. Assirvaden, please!

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, we have already got competent officers at the Attorney General's Office who are doing their work and we are going to organise a few events during the course of the year for training of the law officers.

Mr Uteem: Sir, at page 581, item 22060 - *Maintenance*, may we know from the hon. Attorney General why there is an increase of almost Rs1 m. especially for 2011?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, it is for the refurbishment of offices and reception areas. In fact, no refurbishment has been done since the occupation of the building in the year 1992.

Programme Code 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services (Rs29,892,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation was called.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 582, under item 22120011 - *Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, may we know to whom these fees are being paid, who are the legal advisers who represent us, the Republic of Mauritius, before the Privy Council and how are they selected?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually there are three cases, the Paradise Rentals v. the State of Mauritius, Raphaël Fishing Company Limited v. the State of Mauritius and Mr Panday's application for permission to appeal to the Privy Council. The fees have been paid to Royds Solicitors, London.

Mr Baloomoody: We know for the Solicitor, but who was the Counsel who appeared on behalf of the...

The Chairperson: The question has been answered. It has been paid to a firm of solicitors.

Mr Baloomoody: The firm of solicitors, with due respect...

The Chairperson: No.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is: who is the Counsel who appears before the Privy Council to argue the case?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I don't have the information precisely now with me. I can circulate it if I have it from my officer, but Royds Solicitors have their Barristers with whom they work.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, I wish to inform the hon. Third Member for Constituency No. 1 that officers from the Attorney General's office do also appear in cases for the Privy Council.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Baloomoody! I'll call hon. Ms Anquetil to put the question.

Ms Anquetil: On Page 582, item 26210 - *Current Grant to International Organisations*, can the hon. Attorney General inform the House what are the benefits that the country will derive from it?

Mr Varma: We have a number of organisations. I will be brief as far as possible.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am the one who decides whether a question is allowable, please.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, order!

Mr Varma: As far as the Hague Conference on Private International Law is concerned, the purpose is to harmonise the rules of private international law to provide individuals and juridical persons a high degree of legal security despite differences between legal systems. As far as the Asia-African Legal Consultative Organisation is concerned, this inter-Governmental organisation is consultative in nature and focuses on a variety of issues in

international law: the contribution to the International tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the tribunal is located in Germany and it is one of the four dispute resolution mechanisms in matters concerning the interpretation of the UNCLOS and its application; the contribution to the Commonwealth Legal Advisory Service ...

The Chairperson: The Attorney General may circulate the answer if it is too long, please.

Mr Varma: But I want to answer. The service has been operating since 1962, I will be as brief as possible, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Attorney General, please! Will you circulate the answer, please?

Mr Seetaram: On page 582, I refer to item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*. The provision of Rs7,245,000 for 2010 has been reduced to Rs6,534,000. Can the hon. Attorney General provide information as to why such a decrease in the other staff costs?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, the reduced provision will be sufficient. The actual expenditure for 2010 was Rs4,846,000.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, the Attorney General earlier rightly pointed to the fact that under this programme there is an increase in staff at page 584 under *Programme 562*, which is most welcomed given the situation of over-worked colleagues at the State Law Office. However, under *Compensation of Employees*, at pages 582 and 583, under the two sub programmes, the funding goes down. How does the Attorney General propose to realise this feat of increasing staffing, but decreasing compensation to employees?

Mr Varma: The exercise will be carried out by the Judicial Legal Service Commission and then we will make arrangements.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 582, item 22160 - *Overseas Training*, can we have details of the staff who have benefitted from the overseas training and what are the criteria being used to identify those who qualified for these overseas training? I refer to page 583 item 22120 *Fees* amounting to Rs3,455,000. May we know who are the beneficiaries and who cash this tremendous amount of fees?

Mr Varma: As regards the first question on overseas training, it is subsistence and out-of-pocket allowance to legal officers on short training abroad. I have the details for that. In 2010, one officer attended a training programme on legislative drafting in Ghana.

As regards the second question about fees being paid, under Programme 561, it is Rs1 m.; Programme 56201: Rs300,000 and programme 56026: Rs300,000. There was a lecture

given by Prof. Torul to law officers, training given by Prof. Craig to law officers and we had a one-day seminar on team building for law officers.

Mr Seetaram: I refer to page 582 in relation to item 22100 - *Publication and Stationery*. The estimate of 2010 is Rs1,625,000 and it increases to the sum of Rs2,225,000. Can the hon. Attorney General explain why there has been such a rise?

Mr Varma: There is an increase in the cost of stationery and printing consumables.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 579 and 580 *Services to be provided and Service Standards (Indicators)* targets. It was explained to me by the Ministry of Finance that the purpose here was to have the actual year as a baseline and to have a gradual improvement over the years in the service. In this case, I find that under *Administrative and Advisory Unit*, the number of days for tendering legal advice, the baseline is 10, and from 2011-2013 it remains 10. Concerning the number of legal advice opinion, there is an increase in 2012 and on the next page, for the drafting, the baseline is again 6, and it remains 6 throughout. Somehow there is a paradox here having regard to the PBB, otherwise we would not need the PBB. Could the Attorney General please explain?

Mr Varma: As regard to the average time for tendering legal advice, as the work is quite demanding at the Attorney General's office, there is advice that is given either the same day or the next day. The hon. Members of the Opposition have been in Government and they know how the work is at the Attorney General's office. We take less than 10 days in most cases for tendering legal advice. As far as the number is concerned, Mr Chairperson, the target is 5000 and 5200 and for this year it is 4972. It depends on the requests that we get. There is another point that was raised by the hon. Member as regards the average time for drafting, yet again, Mr Chairperson, sometimes laws have to be drafted in two or three days.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem, one last question!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 582, under item 21 *Compensation of Employees*, we know that there is now a separation between the Attorney General's office and the DPP's office. Can I ask the hon. Attorney General whether there are any senior lawyers attached to the Attorney General's office, which also get involved into criminal matters?

Mr Varma: In fact, this is what we want. We want people who are at Attorney General's office still do some criminal matters and those at the DPP's office still do some civil matters. But we are trying to find a *modus operandi*.

Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs87,938,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development was called.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Attorney General to give us the name of all the members of the Law Reform Commission are concerned? As far as the papers on the report which are produced by the Law Reform Commission, I did once in the past asked the same question to the former Attorney General and I was told that the information was on the website and I did check, but I did not find all of them. Is it possible, in the future, for the Attorney General to lay on the Table of the House all the papers which have been produced by the Law Reform Commission?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, as far as the first question is concerned, the Chairperson is Mr Guy Ollivry. The members are: Mr Satyajit Boolell, DPP; Mr David Chan Kan Cheong, Parliamentary Counsel; Mrs Rita Teelock, Master and Registrar; Mr Rashad Daureeawoo, Barrister; Mr Pazhany Rangasamy, Attorney; Mr Roland Constantin, Notary; Mrs Odile Lim Tung, Law Academic; Mrs Daisy Rani Brigemohane and Mr Navin Gunnasaya, members of Civil Society.

As far as the reports are concerned, I have checked today, all the reports are on the website.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the composition of the Law Reform Commission - I don't have a personal problem with any of these members - would it not be proper to have, at least, a Chairman of the Bar Council, the Chairman of the Law Society ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please hon. Baloomoody, it is under the law, I don't know if there is a statutory provision.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, this is a question of policy. We are debating the Budget. If the hon. Member wants this to happen, he can come with a substantive question and then I will reply.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I know what are the criteria that have been used? We are been asked to vote for a Budget for these gentlemen.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, put your question, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Attorney General what criteria were used to have these people nominated? We are going to vote a budget for that.

Mr Varma: The same criteria that were used when they were in office, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: I have never been in office. Can I know what were the criteria used for the selection of law officials in the Law Reform Commission?

The Chairperson: I understand that it is the same criteria which were used last year and for this financial year the same criteria are going to be used.

Mr Baloomoody: Fortunately, I did not vote any budget last year. Can I know what are the criteria?

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, you have put your question and the hon. Attorney General has answered.

Mr Varma: It is clear, capabilities, years of experience are used to select these persons. I don't think that someone can challenge the competence of Mr Guy Ollivry.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! Order please!

Mr Varma: They are competence, capabilities, experience, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo, if you have any question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we have been asked to vote a budget to fund the work of the Commission. The Commission produced nine papers and reports. I would like the hon. Attorney General to tell us whether these reports are being translated into legislation, which will be introduced in 2011 before the House.

Mr Varma: Indeed, Mr Chairperson, a couple of these suggestions contained in the report will be translated into legislation. But it will all depend upon the Government's approval.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I know from the hon. Attorney General whether the Law Commission comes up *proprio motu* on the title of the report or are they asked by the Attorney General's office to come and research and deliver specific topics?

Mr Varma: Both, Mr Chairperson. In fact, they can come up with their own reports. The members of the public can also make representations and if the Law Reform Commission thinks it fit to come forward with a report on that specific idea, they can come up or the Attorney General can request the Law Reform Commission to come forward with a report.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Attorney General whether the Members of the Law Commission are appointed on a yearly basis or for a longer period of time?

Mr Varma: For a longer period of time.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: In terms of ensuring the cost-effectiveness of public spending and we are voting Rs8.9 m. for next year, which I totally support, it is important to know how far the recommendations of this Commission are indeed translated into legislation. Can the hon. Attorney General tell us on the basis of what is being presented as an achievement in respect of the money we invest in the Commission? What percentage of the recommendations will be useful inasmuch as they are translated into legislation?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, nine papers on the reports were produced by the Law Reform Commission. It is at page 577, the papers and reports have been highlighted and we are working on this. I have answered the question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me restate the question. We are being asked to approve a Budget, we need to reflect and consider the cost-effectiveness of utilising public funds, resources in such a manner. With respect to the Commission, we fully approved the idea, but we want to know what the country is getting in return, not just a mere report, but to what extend are these reports being translated into legislation? If the hon. Attorney General cannot tell us for the report produced in 2010, maybe I can understand. What about the reports produced in the previous year, in 2009? How much of that would have been translated into legislation vote before the House?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I don't have all the information with me, but I can give two concrete examples. There was a paper which was produced on divorce by mutual consent and this will translated into legislation very soon. There was the report on the foreign law firms and again this is now law. These are two concrete examples and if the hon. Member wants more details, he can come with a Parliamentary Question, I am willing to answer.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask a question to the hon. Attorney General with regard to the draft paper on consumer protection on fundamental rights? This was a document which has been produced by the Commission. Could we know where matters stand? Have we budgeted a specific sum to ensure that we enforce, at least, we put in practice, the implementation of the reform?

The Chairperson: I have to intervene. The question of preparing a report does not mean that you are usurping the right of Parliament or the Executive to pass laws. The reports are here as an advisory, consultative report, and we are not bound by whatever report may come.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is whether we have put a specific sum aside in the budget to implement this part of the reform. Is the answer yes or no?

The Chairperson: First of all, the question is whether it should be accepted.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not asking whether there are many..

The Chairperson: No, I don't think that we can go that far. A report has been prepared and submitted to the executive of the Ministry and it is for the Ministry and for the Parliament eventually to decide whether to pass laws.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 580, at *O1 P2 Average time (month) for preliminary assessment paper for review of any aspect of law*, we have been told about the average time for preliminary assessment paper for review of any aspect of the law. Do I understand this to mean preliminary assessment by the State Law Office and, if so, are we to understand that all of these nine papers and reports have already been preliminarily assessed?

Mr Varma: Not necessarily by the Attorney General's office.

Mr Obeegadoo: For next year, we have been told that there is a minimum of six papers and reports coming our way in return for the funds we are going to invest. Since my hon. colleague has been told that some of these reports are volunteered by the Commission itself, others are commissioned by the State. May we know which reports are coming up?

Mr Varma: I don't have the information right now, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Ganoo: Is the Law Reform Commission working on a new Bail Act because this was announced in the House some time back?

Mr Varma: I can't say, Mr Chairperson.

Programme Code 563 – Law and Reform Development (Rs8,900,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprises, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection – Programme Code 701 – Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection was called.

Mrs Perraud: On page 593, under item 22030 - *Rent*, I would like to ask the Minister why there is a decrease?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The amount was not known at the time the budget was prepared.

Mr Obeegadoo: We are told that one of the first major achievements is the setting up of this Mauritius Business Growth Scheme, certainly commendable if it is the case. May we know from the Minister how this translates into an operational goal with an indicator and targets for 2011 because I do see something at page 590, but this is under another *Programme 703* and it is for 2013.

Mr Baloomoody: As for *Major Achievements for 2010*, it is said the Ministry has given assistance to the Law Reform Commission to review and reform Consumer legislation. May we have some particulars about this Law Reform Commission?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: On which page please!

Mr Baloomoody: Concerning *Major Achievements for 2010*, I refer to the last bullet - *Assistance to the Law Reform Commission to Review and Reform Consumer Legislation*. May we know from the hon. Minister which legislation has been reviewed and reformed probably?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, the Law Reform Commission was contacted to undertake the assignment and to review the reform of consumer laws and legislation. The final draft has just been received in October and the drafts are actually perused by our officers. Its new technical inputs are being analysed and, of course, it will go through Cabinet first and then come here.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 593, the first item, under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees* and item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, can I ask the hon. Minister why there has been a decrease of Rs4 m. in the emoluments and, at the same time, there has been an increase in the number of employees?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all, there were some posts which were supposed to be filled in 2010, the posts were not filled and right now, the amount earmarked is sufficient for 2011.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give us a list of all the registered complaints at the Consumer Protection Unit? He says that 75% have been registered and settled. Can we know in which field and can he circulate the list?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Is it page 590?

Mr Baloomoody: At page 587 on *Major Achievements of 2010*. It is said that 75% of all registered complaints at the Consumer Protection Unit were investigated and settled. May we know about the 75% which have been settled and what has happened to the 25%?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The information will be circulated. I have it here.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know the number of complaints we have had?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The number of complaints recorded in 2010 as at 06 December 2010 is 1406. The number of complaints settled in 2010 as at 06 December 2010 is 1154.

(Interruptions)

I can give you the number for 2009.

The Chairperson: Order please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem and hon. Ameer Meea, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, may I?

The Chairperson: Yes, we are waiting for the hon. Member. I will put the question if there is no question!

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to the MBGS (Mauritius Business Growth Scheme) which we discussed earlier and I see on page 588, the second bullet, that the activities of public agencies are being re-organised and streamlined around the MBGS. May I ask whether the MBGS is already operational and, if not, when will it be?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is operational since October.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: On page 587, I refer to *Major Achievements for 2010*, at eighth bullet - *Publication of three issues of "Savoir Choisir" magazine, with wide coverage, highlighting the rights of consumers*. I would like to know the reasons why this magazine has been removed from circulation? Will the hon. Minister confirm that this has been done after pressure from some quarters?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The magazine has not been removed. It has been distributed twice in 2010.

Mrs Perraud: At page 594, under item 22060 - *Maintenance* and item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, can I ask the hon. Minister why there is an increase for these items?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: With regard to the first item *Maintenance*, there is an increase because we have new IT equipment. Therefore, there is an amount earmarked for maintenance of IT equipment, maintenance of motor vehicles and vehicles. For the second item *Cleaning Services*, the contract has been awarded to General Cleantech; the amount is Rs4,500 monthly, and we have to multiply it by twelve, which amounts to Rs54,000.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 594, under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, there is an annual provision of Rs1 m. to carry out studies or surveys. Can we know what studies or surveys have been carried out in year 2010, and whether it is the same type of surveys and studies that is being repeated for 2011? If not, what is the nature of the study to be carried out and who is the service provider for this survey?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, the amount was not used in 2010; it will be used in 2011. It will be used to carry out surveys on the services provided by the CPU. Part of the money will be used for data collection on the price of commodities around the country.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am coming back to page 593, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees* and I link that to page 598. For 28 funded positions in 2010,

there was an amount of Rs20 m. and for 32 funded positions in 2011, I find an amount of Rs15 m. There is the same big difference for *Personal Emoluments* from Rs18 m. for 28 funded positions.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has made her point.

Mrs Labelle: It's the same thing. So, I need an explanation.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, I have answered this question, but I can repeat it. Mr Chairperson, the amount earmarked is sufficient for 2011. I think we have been able to do some savings, and I think it is good news for everybody.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 588, at *Major Constraints and Challenges*, we learned that the Ministry is being reorganised and will be located under one single roof. But I am trying to find the corresponding budgetary provisions which would allow for that, and I do not find it. Could the hon. Minister guide us as to the financial implications of this reorganisation and relocation and where it is budgeted for?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we are moving to Infinity Tower very soon, and we will be saving about Rs1.5 m. annually.

Programme Code 701 - Policy and Management for Business Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer (Rs26,555,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 703 - SME Development and Competitiveness was called.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 590, with regard to *Programme 703: SME Development and Competitiveness*, the outcome to be achieved by the year 2013 is a total output of Rs100 billion. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication as to what is the total output with regard to SMEs this year, and what will be the expected output next year?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, it is the number of enterprises that will go under the scheme. For 2010 the target is 20; for 2011 it is...

(Interruptions)

I will circulate the information.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 594, with regard to item 22040001 - *Office Equipment (MBGS)*, can we have some details as to why there is such a big increase in the amount, and for what purpose is that going to be used? Is it for the new building?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all, MBGS exists since September, and the amount was partly used in 2010. As from 2011, we will use the amount for office equipment and furniture.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning *Programme 703, item 22030 - Rent (MSDC)* at page 594, I see that there is quite a drastic decrease in the amount. For 2010, the estimate is at Rs2,075,000, and it goes down to Rs690,000. Can the hon. Minister explain such a reduction in the amount of rent?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: As I said before, MBGS exists since September 2010, and the amount was not known when the budget was prepared. We are presently at St. James Court.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 594, under item *2212008 - Fees to Consultants (MSDC)*, I see that for the year 2010, a sum of Rs81 m. has been disbursed to consultants, and when we refer to page 590, the number of enterprises assisted is nil. Can we have a list of those consultants and how much they have been paid? Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the number of enterprises assisted is nil?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we have not used the amount in 2010. As I said before, MBGS exists since September 2010.

For 2011, of course, we will use it. It is earmarked for salaries and allowances for MBGS staff, hiring of consultants for hand-holding of enterprises locally and from abroad.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 590, *P1: Number of enterprises accessing finance under the MBGS*. I note on page 595, item *28215005 - Pay Back Scheme* (MBGS) that a sum of Rs30 m. has been budgeted. Should we understand that the MBGS will be managing a fund which will be extending credit to small enterprises to the tune of Rs30 m. for the next year and, if so, what are the modalities for the operation of this fund?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme is a component of the Manufacturing and Services Development and Competitiveness Project financed by the Mauritian Government through a loan from the World Bank. As I said, it was launched in September 2010. There are two schemes: the 50:50 matching grant and the 90:10 payback schemes. The 50:50 is a grant which the enterprise will not have to reimburse whereas for the 90:10, they will have to pay a royalty of 11% on the growth of the turnover.

Mr Uteem: On page 594, under item *22900099 - Miscellaneous Expenses (MBGS)*, may we know for what the miscellaneous expenses stand for?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The amount earmarked will be used for -

1. Website development for the MBGS
2. Promotional campaign for the MBGS
3. Organisation for cluster workshops
4. Running of the project productivity unit

Mr Obeegadoo: I come back to the point I had asked earlier on page 595, item 28215 - *Transfers to Private Enterprises*. We note that under item 282150002, there is a *Matching Grant (MSDC)*. I am not sure, but I know what MSDC stands for, and then a payback scheme of the MBGS. We are being told that this is World Bank's money. Is that a loan from the World Bank? Is it a grant under the IDA? It cannot be! I would like to know what about it. But, most importantly, does the MBGS and the MSDC have the technical cadre, the technical expertise to manage such large sums, parts of which are loans for repayment?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: MSDC stands for Manufacturing and Services Development and Competitiveness. Yes, we have the expertise. We have recruited one manager from Swiss; his name is Henri Stetter.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 594, item 22120007 - *Fees for Training (MSDC)*, there was a sum of Rs4 m. for 2010. Maybe the hon. Minister can let us know the amount spent out of the Rs4 m.? Also for this coming year, there is an amount of Rs6.4 m. May we know which training we are talking about and who will be the service provider for this training, and to whom the training will be given?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Again, the amount was not used in 2010 because MBGS exists since September. For 2011, it will be used for training of staff of MBGS and also for project coordinating unit.

Mrs Labelle: Can the hon. Minister tell us who will ensure the training?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We will, of course, follow the procedures.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I do hope that the hon. Minister will follow procedures. I take it for granted that he will follow the procedures; that's why I did not ask that question. But I ask who will be the service provider?

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we take a last question from hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: On page 595, under item 26313083 - *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*, may we know from the hon. Minister how many fairs have been organised by SMEDA and how many they intend to organise next year?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Three fairs have been organised this year. We will decide next year for 2011.

Programme Code 703: SME Development and Competitiveness (Rs202,702,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 743: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 591, the two sets of indicators. On the one hand, *O1: P3 - Cumulative backlog of inactive and dormant cooperative societies*, with the total of 746 to be wound up in the near future and, on the other hand, the programme for the *Promotion of Cooperative Entrepreneurship* with a smaller number of cooperatives being guided for project formulation and management. I also note that the overall budget for this programme is decreasing - not surprisingly - from one year to another. Could the hon. Minister give us some indications of the trends as regards winding up and creation of new cooperatives?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I think it is on page 591, P3. In fact, a majority of these societies did not register as stipulated in the Cooperative Act. So, they were given some time to re-register and they did not do it.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question to the hon. Minister was: what is the trend? We are being told that there are 746 cooperatives societies that have to be wound up. I am not questioning this as it is the fact. On the other hand, there are 20 new societies that are to be set up presumably since they are being guided in project formulation and management, unless they already existed and they are being provided with technical assistance, I don't know which. What are the trends? Is this phenomenon whereby cooperatives are being phased out gradually?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In my opinion, it will be increased because we will give a lot of schemes to help them.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can we know for year 2010? We know how many have been wound up, it is 56. How many new societies have been registered?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I don't have the number, but I will circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the inactive and dormant cooperative societies, can the hon. Minister tell us the number? What actions are being taken to ensure that all cooperatives do function according to law?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will answer hon. Obeegadoo first. The number of new cooperatives is 73. My second answer for hon. Baloomoody is on page 591, P3: 746.

Mr Baloomoody: What actions have been taken to ensure that those who are not dormant cooperate with the law?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: They will comply because we are very strict. We are giving all the facilities to help them.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 591 - *O1: Monitoring of cooperatives*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this include the management of cooperative

societies by Interim Boards appointed by his Ministry and also how many cooperative societies are presently being managed by Interim Boards which are set by his Ministry?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Interim Boards and caretaker Boards are the same. I have got the answer for hon. Labelle, there are ten caretaker societies.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can we know from the Minister, out of the cooperative societies on the register, how many of them have their accounts audited by officers of his Ministry and how many of these societies have their audit done by external auditors?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all, if the turnover of the society is over Rs10 m. they will have to go on private. There are 68 by the Ministry and 816 exceed Rs10 m.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: So, the majority is being audited by external auditors. If we look at the number of employees at the Ministry, how many of these employees are dedicated to do the audit because there are only 68 societies which are audited by the Ministry. How many staff is deployed on audit?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, it's 816 which do not exceed Rs10 m. It is the opposite.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Still on the page 595, I see that there is no more contribution to the International Co-operative Alliance. There was a contribution of Rs320,000 in 2010 and it is not provided to contribute to the ICA next year. Can we know the reason why? There is a contribution of Rs320,000 which has been stopped for next year and normally it is the Mauritius Cooperative Union which is a member of the ICA, but under item 28211030 - *Other Current Transfers: Mauritius Co-operative Union*, the grant to the MCU still carries on. Can we know why the MCU is still carrying on with the grant of Government, but still the affiliation to ICA has been stopped? Secondly, what is the use of Rs2,2 m. grant for the MCU?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Let me answer the first question. In fact, we were contributing for the ICA through MCU and today the MCU is no longer considered as the apex body of cooperatives. This is why the contribution to ICA by the Ministry is no longer earmarked in the budget.

For the second one, you can see on page 596 that all the amounts are not provided in 2011. In fact, there is a better option for these federations as there will be schemes that they will be able to take advantage of. It is also good to note that the Government has financed Mauritius Livestock Marketing Co-operative Federation to the tune of Rs1,2 m. on a pasteurisation plant and has also financed the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Federation for the finance of a tractor.

For the third question concerning Mauritius Co-operative Union, an amount of Rs2,2 m. is earmarked for 2011. In fact, they still need help.

Programme Code 604 Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs70,897,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 525 Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions Sir. On page 591, *Sub-Programme 52501:O1: P2: Complaints resolved - 90%*, I would like to know how many complaints were in actual fact received and processed by the Ministry? That is the first question. My second question concerns the next programme. I must confess I am not conversant with this idea of Citizens Charters to be facilitated in Ministries and disseminated in private sector organisations, but, in any case, there is no staffing.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Let me answer the first question, Mr Chairperson. As at 06 December 2010, we have had 2671 checks...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have 1,406. In fact, I have already answered this question.

The Chairperson: Yes. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the same item on page 591, may I know from the hon. Minister how many cases have been prosecuted for any offence for failing to comply with regulations relating to price control?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Contraventions for year 2010 as at 09 December are 122.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to page 591 on Programme 525: *On the Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance* where it is said that the Ministries/Departments *provide continually improved public services to the local population and visitors from abroad*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a specific unit with regard to that objective and if so, how many people are manned in that unit, and how many contraventions have been taken with regard to abuse of services to visitors from abroad, with regard to the price, of course?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, our staff is for local population and the visitors from abroad.

Mr Baloomoody: In principle, there have been contraventions. How many contraventions can we identify with regard to abuse by local suppliers, sellers with regard to foreigners?

The Chairperson: If the Minister does not have the answer, he can circulate the information.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will circulate the details.

Mr Obeegadoo: I was seeking some explanation as to *Sub-Programme 52503 Citizens Charter* on page 592 to understand what this is all about. The more so as there appears to be an amount of Rs8,385,000 budgeted mostly for wages, salaries, compensation of employees as at page 594, but on page 599, there appears to be no staffing provided. Could we have some explanation?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we do have staff. To date we have 40 Ministries and Departments which have developed respective customer charters and I can inform the House that I have chaired several meetings with the private sector. The collaboration of the banking and insurance sectors have been sought and by next year we will have Citizen Charters in the private sector.

Mr Lesjongard: I refer the hon. Minister to page 597 item *31132801 - Acquisition of Software Computerisation of the Consumer Protection Unit*. Can the hon. Minister give us an indication as to the type of software that is being purchased, whether tender was launched for the acquisition of the software, the name of the successful tenderer and the total cost of the project?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Tender procedures have been followed. It is Leal and Co. which got the tender and the primary objectives of the MIS are –

- (i) provide up to date and timely information on inspections, product prices, case files and complaints;
- (ii) ensure effective inspection planning;
- (iii) improve the monitoring of prices, of products and assisting the price observatory;
- (iv) improve the monitoring of case file;
- (v) process consumer complaints effectively.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 597 *Sub-Programme 52503: Citizens Charter*, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*. For this coming year it is Rs587,000. I go to page 599, I am looking at the funded position under the same programme and I don't see any figure; it is nil. May we have some explanation? For funded positions, it is nil, but we have an amount under the programme.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we are using the staff from the Business section.

Mr Baloomoody: We are being asked to vote a budget. Could we know how many staff there are?

The Chairperson: There is no need to. The Member should put his question straightforwardly.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I did not hear the other question.

Mr Baloomoody: What was the reply?

(*Interruptions*)

I will make it clear then. Can I know how many staff we have in that e-unit sector or business sector?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will circulate the details.

Programme Code 525 Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance (Rs20,028,000) was, on question put, agreed to,

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Centralised Operations of Government – Programme Code No. 951- Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can I get some clarification on the fact that under item 22 *Goods and Services* on page 601? If you look at the item *subsistence allowance, air ticket and hotel accommodation* ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Deepalsing, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: ... we find the same provision for air tickets and the same allowance for hotel accommodation, but for subsistence allowance there is a sum of Rs10 m. additional that has been provided. Can we get some explanation as to the reason of the increase?

Mr Jugnauth: This is what is budgeted for next year

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can we know the specific details of the reason why there is that increase of Rs10 m.?

Mr Jugnauth: They are expected to increase because they are going to be more missions and more conferences.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Provision for the air tickets remains the same, so there cannot be more missions.

Mr Jugnauth: I have already answered.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please! Hon. Obeegadoo, I am listening to you!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 601 item 26 - *Grants*, there is a significant reduction in the amount budgeted on the grants and, in particular, on the item 26314 - *Local Authorities, RRA and Extra Budgetary Units*. Would the Minister provide some clarification?

Mr Jugnauth: At page 601, item 26314, they are Local Authorities, RRA and Extra Budgetary Units.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: why is there this significant decrease from one year to the next?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, this is what has been budgeted for next year.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 602, item 26210105 - *Contribution to the Permanent Court of Arbitration*, an amount of Rs8 m. has been earmarked. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this institution is in operation and whether we have had recourse to it as yet.

Mr Jugnauth: This is what Government intends to put in place.

Mr Obeegadoo: At the same page, Mr Chairperson, item 26210158 *Contribution to Regional Multi-Disciplinary Centre for Excellence*, this is the much wanted World Bank project, if I am not mistaken, which links to education. We have Rs12 m. budgeted for this year, none for next year and then it goes up to Rs15 m. in 2012. Would the hon. Minister care to brief us as to what the situation is?

Mr Jugnauth: This is the budget that has been provided and will be used for next year.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I ask whether this institution is meant to be operational next year?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 601, item 28217002 - *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*, can I know how much liability has actually been paid out for the year 2010?

Mr Jugnauth: Rs36.3 m., Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 601, under item 22120003 - *Commissions of Enquiry and Committees*, we budgeted Rs3 m. Can I know from the hon. Minister of Finance the amount that has been paid and to what Commissions of Enquiry or Committees?

Mr Jugnauth: I will circulate the information, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 602 item 26210167 - *IMF Training Institute: IMF Trust Fund for Training in Africa*, in this case no money was budgeted last year, but Rs31 m. for next year. I want to know whether this is linked to the previous one, the RMCE which would explain why in one year there was money for one and in the other year money for the other. What is the link and are both to be operational next year?

Mr Jugnauth: They are different training institutions altogether.

Mr Obeegadoo: Are they going to be operational next year and if so, who are the intended beneficiaries of the training?

Mr Jugnauth: It is going to be operational next year.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, at page 602, item 26210157 - *COMESA Fund Project*, there was a provision of Rs4.6 m. last year and this year again, another Rs4.6 m. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the COMESA Fund has been set up yet?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, it has been set up.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 603, item 32155011 *Road Development Co Ltd*, it would appear that this year Government has purchased Rs10 m. worth of equity in the Road Development Co. Ltd. May I know what was the purpose of such an investment?

Mr Jugnauth: The company has not yet been set up.

Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs2,424,327,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 605, under item 28221006 - *Projects/Schemes Financed under the National Lottery*, there was an investment of Rs400 m. last year. May we have some explanation as to what this refers to?

Mr Jugnauth: This is the amount that we will be receiving from the National Lottery to finance a number of projects.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at the same page, under item 28222007 - *Grant/Loan Scheme for Small Planters/Workers Participation in the Equity Capital of Sugar Sector Companies*, an amount of Rs223 m. has been budgeted for this year, but only Rs50 m. for next year. Would the hon. Minister clarify?

Mr Jugnauth: This is with regard to the agreement of Government of Mauritius with the MSPA deal and that amount has been earmarked for same.

Mr Obeegadoo: Right at the bottom of page 605, item 31113301 - *New City at Highlands Project Implementation of Infrastructure Plan*, a sum of Rs50 m. has been

earmarked for this year and Rs50m. for next year. May we have the progress report concerning that project?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, it is in progress.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, may we ask the hon. Minister, out of the sum of Rs50 m. which has been earmarked, how much has been spent?

Mr Jugnauth: As I said, it is in progress. Nothing has been spent yet.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether any tender exercise has started to identify the persons who are going to design the project?

Mr Jugnauth: There are two consultants and we are negotiating with both of them.

Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs445,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 989: Contingencies and Reserves (Rs1,800,000,000) was called and agreed to.

COMMITTEE STAGE

THE APPROPRIATION (2011) BILL

(NO. XVII OF 2010)

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010) was considered and agreed to.

THE PROGRAMME-BASED BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011 & INDICATIVE ESTIMATES 2012 & 2013

The Programme-Based Budget Estimates 2011 & Indicative Estimates was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.

Second Reading

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL
(No. XVII of 2010)

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I move that the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XVII of 2010) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme, a new Local Government Bill is being worked out by my Ministry. Members of this august Assembly will agree that the revamping of the Local Government has profound institutional, financial and administrative implications. Furthermore, there is a need to have wide public consultation and consensus before the new Bill is introduced in the National Assembly. Mr Speaker, Sir, the holding of the Local Government election this year as provided in the present legislation and scrapping the Council in less than a year with a new Local Government Bill would be futile and would imply wastage of public fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to provision of the Local Government Act 1989, as amended, the election of the Chairperson and vice-Chairperson of the Village and District Council as well as election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Municipal Council cannot be held during a Local Government election year. Consequently, as the Amendment Bill is providing for the postponing of the Local Government election to next year, provisions are also being made for the holding of election of the Chairperson and vice-Chairperson of Village and District Councils and the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Municipal Councils between 13 and 17 December this year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to allow the Local Authorities to carry out their normal business until the holding of the election next year, the Amendment Bill also provides for the extension of the mandate of the Municipal, District and Village Councillors currently in office until 2011. Mr Speaker Sir, as the law stands today, we have two different definitions in force for Local Authorities – one is the Local Government Act 1989 and the other is the Local Government Act 2003. In order to address this ambiguity, the Amendment Bill provides for the existing Local Authorities and the Local Government Act 1989 to continue to be deemed to be local authorities for the purpose of Local Government Act 2003.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun rose and seconded.

(00.25 a.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Bérenger): Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, we, on this side of the House, the Opposition, stand against the postponement of the Municipal elections. But what I find particularly unacceptable is the fact that five and a half years after the general elections of 2005, municipal elections are being postponed because a new piece of legislation is still not ready. To understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, how we have reached this point that Government has to come and ask for the postponement of municipal elections, I think it is worth travelling down memory lane in order to understand where we stand now.

After the 2000 general elections, in the Presidential Address on 03 October 2000, the then (MMM-MSM) Government, through the mouth of the President, stated that the then existing Local Government system and the existing legal framework for Local Authorities would be thoroughly reviewed in order to put villages and towns at par and give real power through new municipalities to the rural areas. Brainstorming sessions were held in July, September, and October 2001 with councillors, officers of Local Government and members of the public were invited through a press communiqué in August 2001 to submit their views and suggestions for a new Local Government system. The then MMM-MSM Government appointed Mr Robert Ahnee, former Judge of the Supreme Court - the same former judge of the Supreme Court who drafted the Autonomy Legislation for Rodrigues - was therefore requested to draft new legislation concerning Local Government on the mainland. In early 2002, he came forward with a powerful piece of legislation. It is not a coincidence that the MMM-MSM Government between 2000 and 2005 came with two very important pieces of legislation as far as local democracy, regional democracy is concerned: the legislation for Rodrigues Autonomy and a complete revamping of the law and the institutions for Local Government.

My only regret is that - whereas in the case of the Rodrigues legislation, we put it in the Constitution, therefore, it cannot be mishandled without the required majority - we did not put local democracy in the Constitution. We put Rodrigues Autonomy in the Constitution, but we did not entrench regional democracy in the Constitution. Be that as it may, the piece of legislation prepared by former Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr Robert Ahnee, was superb. *Un grand pas en avant, une révolution, en fait, le pouvoir donné, non seulement aux municipalités déjà existantes qui voyaient leur pouvoir augmenté massivement, mais le pouvoir donné aux villages, régions rurales. Un pas révolutionnaire en avant.* A very good piece of legislation. But we did not stop there. A High Level Committee of officials under the chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet was set up to examine the Bill and move things

forward. The High Level Committee of officials advised Government that in view of the complexity of the exercise, there was need to fine-tune and consult again so that by August 2002, there would be a complete Bill ventilated again in the public, prior to its vetting by the Attorney General's office, and its subsequent introduction in the National Assembly. Through this piece of legislation, village councils would no longer exist - I take it that it would be the same under the new legislation - and there would be municipalities all over the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Cabinet agreed to the introduction into the National Assembly of the new Local Government Bill on 23 May 2003. The new Bill was read for the second time in the National Assembly on 01 July 2003. One point I agree with the hon. Minister is that, as now, with a completely revamped Local Government organisation, there is a lot of preparation to be done. There was a lot of institution building and preparation to be done. This took some time, Mr Speaker, Sir, after the Bill was read a second time on 01 July 2003. Elections were to be held at the end of 2004. Those preparations were ongoing and, of course, we all know that general elections were to come by mid-2005. So, we had a new and very good piece of legislation ready. Village councils would be done away with, because general elections were coming mid-2005, and the municipal elections that were to be held by end of 2004 were postponed to 2006, that is, as soon as possible, after the country would have settled down after general elections.

As I said, I am particularly proud of these two pieces of legislation that we got prepared and passed by the National Assembly. Nothing prevented the country from moving forward in 2006. If we go back to that piece of legislation prepared by former Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr Robert Ahnee, it is a beautiful and powerful piece of legislation. So, nothing prevented the country to go for municipal elections in 2006, and take a big step forward in terms of local democracy.

Unfortunately, *par fanatisme politique*, that piece of legislation was done away with. It should never have been done away with. When the new piece of legislation comes, we will see how it compares with the piece of legislation prepared by former Justice Ahnee. We will make the comparison. But I repeat that the country was ready. After the general elections of 2005, we should have gone forward with those elections, and put villages and towns at par, give more powers to existing municipalities, and give real power to the rural areas, Mr Speaker, Sir. This was *par fanatisme politique* and it is one of the sad things.

When I think about what happened, especially in the early days after the elections of 2005, there was a collective hysteria. Good things that had been done were undone, only

because it had been done by the MMM/MSM Government. I won't go into the long list of things that were undone, although very good for the country. This is one example where a good piece of legislation had been prepared and voted by the National Assembly, and was ready to be put into practice and, *par fanatique politique*, was done away with. We have lost five and a half years. Five and half years later, the Bill is still not ready. That Bill that is being prepared will either be a replica of what former Justice Ahnee prepared or a less positive Bill. Let's wait and see! How long we will wait, we have not been told. How more long time is to be lost, we have not been told, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, already, we have lost five and half years.

All this makes me very sad. *C'est le pays qui a perdu beaucoup de temps. C'est la démocratie qui a marqué le pas.* That's why I say that we stand against the postponement of the municipal elections, but, more than that, we find it unacceptable that five and a half years have been wasted, and now we are finalising the new piece of legislation. During those five and a half years, Mr Speaker, Sir, *jamais les municipalités ne sont tombées aussi bas.* I won't go into details, but everybody knows. That is why we stand against the postponement of the municipal elections. *Jamais les municipalités ne sont tombées aussi bas!* We are postponing municipal elections, to give time, after five and a half years of wasted time, for the Ministry concerned and Government to complete the preparation of the new Bill. I can only hope that there will not be all kinds of funny tricks written into the law. We know that, in some countries, even in great democracies, there are all kinds of tricks when it comes to elections - legislative elections, senate elections or local elections. Sometimes, it is gerrymandering, fiddling with the boundaries of constituencies or municipal wards. I hope nothing of the sort happens. I hope also other *trucs du métier* are not resorted to, to try and fiddle with local democracy.

We stand against the postponement of municipal elections, but we hope that the piece of legislation that will before the House will be as good as the piece of legislation, which the former Justice of Supreme Court, Mr Robert Ahnee, prepared; with no funny business, no gerrymandering, with no undemocratic attempts to prevent those who deserve to win municipal elections to do so beautifully.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a sad moment when we are asked to postpone municipal elections, because we have wasted five and a half years after killing, *par pur fanatisme politique*, a good piece of legislation that had been voted as far back as 2003.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(00.38 a.m.)

The Minister Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):

Mr Speaker, Sir, having heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition as well as the hon. Minister of Local Government as regards the details and the objects of the Bill, I had initially something else in mind as to what I was going to talk today in the context of this Bill. I have come to the following conclusion, more specifically after having heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition speaking on this issue. Part of what he said is that there was an excellent piece of work that was done for the Local Government Act of 2003. I will go as far as to say that I will not want to debate on the merits of that Act today, because this is not the object of this Bill.

Let me, at least, say that there are always good ways and means to better anything. If, at least, the intention is to better something, I have come to the following conclusion that nothing separates us really from the Opposition. The only fact that separates us is that the elections are being postponed. The reason behind this separation is the difference when we go back in history, and that is the main reason why I believe that this is much ado about nothing, without in any way saying that people should not debate about it. By all means, it is much ado about nothing because, in actual fact, when one reads *l'intervention* of the then Minister of Local Government - it was hon. Choonee in 2004 - there was an amendment that was brought in at that time by the hon. Minister and the then Prime Minister who, I believe, was the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The reason for that amendment was the main crux of the speech of the then Minister of Local Government, it was a confusion in the law, if am I not mistaken. If I may be allowed to refer to the speech, Mr Speaker, Sir, basically - it was very important - just two lines actually -

“We are faced with a situation where the old legislation cannot be repealed completely and replaced by the new one, as the system is not yet ready to accommodate the changes”.

In actual fact, without getting into the merits of what was good and what was not good, or whether it was a good piece of work or not, the fact remains that it was not possible to implement whatever was put into the Local Government Act of 2003. That is why only bits and pieces of that law were proclaimed. What is the situation today? Today, the reality is that we are faced with two laws, one of 1989 and one of 2003. There is an *imbroglio*, a confusion. It is a dangerous situation to have two laws that talk about two dates with regard to elections and this, in my humble opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, cannot be something *qui doit perdurer*. We are duty bound, both the Opposition and Government, in my humble opinion, Mr Speaker,

Sir, to get together to see to it that, at least, this should be sorted out and we should have one regime. We are obliged to get together on this point because if we have two systems, in practical sense if we decide to follow the 1989 law, a citizen of this country can come and say: “no, 2003 has precedence” or “no, 1989 has precedence”. It would be a real problem. That is why I say, having listened to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, his intentions having said that he expects that the new law would be better at least than 2003, if not the same, shows good intent, shows noble intent.

What really divides us here nothing, because history shows that in 2003, there was a postponement, and I will not get into the merits of what the postponement was for, was it valid, and was it not valid for the district councils elections. In 2003, it was postponed and in 2004 it was postponed again to 2006. That is why I say, if the Opposition, which was in Government in those days, postponed the elections for what they believed were good reasons, so be it. Today, this Government believes that we should postpone it for specific reasons. We should all say so: so be it!

Allow me just to end on two issues that I would like to address, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is the following. What we are doing today has nothing to do with anti-democratic principles. Democracy would have been threatened had we cancelled the elections, but democracy here is being consolidated because, we, as a responsible Government, have decided to come to this august Assembly, recognising the principle of separation of powers, recognising that it is Parliament that has to decide upon it. Long live democracy! Therefore, in my humble opinion, what we have to do, today, is to cast aside the merits of an old legislation or the demerits of it.

Let us, for once, get together and accept in unison that we have to do away with this situation of confusion with the two laws and for that matter to go towards a new system next year. What we should also do is not at all try to say that something maybe may go wrong later on, or having a trial of what has not happened, things may go wrong or undemocratic principles. We should not do that. What we should do is basically, for once, in this situation - I say it again, in conclusion, it is much ado about nothing - we should really put party politics aside and put our minds together and really work together for at least one issue, eliminating this duality of laws. Once we have done that we will most probably have another debate whenever any amendment is brought, if ever, by the hon. Minister; we will debate on it then. I see that the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants one thing: that the citizens of the village councils, of the district councils, of the towns come up with something better. Let us all hope, let us all pray, for that I say we should go all together with that amendment.

Thank you very much.

(00.47 a.m.)

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Speaker, Sir, today is indeed a very sad day in the history of the Mauritian Local Government. My observation is not an alarming one, but it is, indeed, naked truth inasmuch as the present Bill goes against the very spirit of the most basic principle of democracy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a caring Government worthy of the name and concerned about democratic principle would not have allowed itself to take such a step, but would have rather arranged the Local Authorities election at the earliest possible. Let me explain myself, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, les élections municipales et villageoises avaient eu lieu le 02 octobre 2005 et le 11 décembre 2005 respectivement et, donc, ces élections devraient théoriquement se tenir cette année. Pourquoi les repousser? On ne sait pas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would not go down memory lane to rekindle past events which are already part of history, but to put things in their right perspective and set issues right, I would like to go back to the Presidential Speech delivered on 29 July 2005 which devoted four paragraphs to Local Government and, one of them, paragraph 232, is worth quoting.

I quote –

“Conscious of the fact that the Local Government Act 2003 will create injustice, Government will repeal the Act and replace it by a new Local Government Act based on democratic principles and providing greater autonomy in the management of the affairs of local authorities”.

That was that in 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, the point I am trying to make is that we have been wasting five and half long years and we have not even seen a draft from the Government despite repeated statements from the hon. Minister before and now to the effect that the Bill is ready; worse, the recent Presidential Speech delivered on 08 June 2010, makes no mention at all of any new Local Government Act or of any proposed reform of local authorities. The last nail in the coffin is the Budget Speech where there is absolutely no provision at all for new legislation for the Local Government Act.

M. le président, je crois comprendre que le projet d'amendement d'aujourd'hui est présenté comme une mesure temporaire en attendant que des réformes soient initiées au niveau des collectivités locales. Mais, malheureusement, la présente situation nous laisse perplexe, pour dire le moins. Vous conviendrez avec moi que la mise en œuvre d'une

réforme de cette envergure - quelque soit le secteur - est un processus long et même complexe nécessitant des ressources importantes, particulièrement sur le plan financier. Comment le ministre compte-t-il procéder avec ce projet de réforme, si absolument aucune provision n'est faite à cet effet dans le budget. Est-ce que dans une année ce gouvernement pourra faire ce qu'il n'a pas pu faire en 5 ans et demi?

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, this amendment gives rise to many questions. What is the real objective of the Government by coming up with this amendment? What are the measures taken to meet these objectives? Do they include the introduction of a new Local Government Act? When will implementation of these measures start? Where is the estimate cost?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is repeating his own argument! He said it in French and now, he is repeating it in English. He must not repeat his own argument.

Mr Nagalingum: If you will allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason why we are saying that there should be municipal elections now - if we are going to say that everything has been turned upside down in the Municipalities, *vous allez nous dire que c'est de la démagogie.*

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly said it. The hon. Member is not allowed to discuss that. It is a very restricted amendment. You have to stick to the amendment.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have provided a quick outline of what is prevailing. Unfortunately, we cannot - like you said - debate on what we are going to justify why we need municipal elections now, because everything is turning upside down. But you will agree with me that this unhealthy situation that is prevailing today is, indeed, very sad for the country. So, I am going to end my speech by saying that today it will go into history that, once again, this Government has wasted five and half long years, and we do hope that the Bill will come very soon.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(00.54 a.m.)

The Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection

(Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen): M. le président, en écoutant les honorables membres de l'opposition, on n'entend que de la négativité. C'est comme ci les cinq villes sont mal gérées depuis 2005.

Mr Speaker: Non, le ministre n'a pas le droit de parler...

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Do not worry, I am here!

(*Interruptions*)

The hon. Minister has no right to comment on the administration of the Local Government, he must speak on the Bill which is a very restricted Bill and on the amendments only.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, when we do not do, they say, why we have not done this and that and when we do, the MMM says why we have not done it this way or that way. They keep on criticising on what we do, but when they were in power, they did not do anything.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: That is not, again, relevant to the debate. The hon. Minister has to focus on the amendment.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, we must not forget that the MMM had postponed the election on three occasions: in the year 2002 for the year 2003; in the year 2003 for the year 2004; in the year 2004 for the year 2006. It is our team which put the election in 2005, after winning the general elections.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, please! It is the same remark for both sides of the House.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have to quote from Hansard what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said in 2004 -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, the simple truth, as we all know, is that 2005 is the year of normal general elections. I don’t think that any reasonable Mauritian will come and say that for the first time Municipal Elections for the whole country should be held in 2005; the same year that general elections would be held.”

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Yes, let the hon. Minister speak!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: *C'est facile à dire qu'il y a toujours eu des discussions parmi nos conseillers. Mais ce n'était que le fruit de la démocratie vivante dans laquelle cette équipe gère les villes...*

Mr Speaker: Le ministre n'a pas le droit de parler de la gérance dans des municipalités. C'est la quatrième fois que je lui dis cela!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Let me remind hon. Members of the Opposition why the Local Government Act had been amended and why power had been removed from Mayors and Chairpersons of District Councils and Councillors in 2003. The reason is crystal clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is because they do not trust their own people. Mr Speaker, Sir, a local authority cannot be administered with a *politique de petits copains*.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: I am again calling the attention of the hon. Minister. He is a new Member of the House, I will give him some latitude, but he must understand my position. This is a very, very restricted amendment. He has to focus on the amendment and restrict his speech to the amendments.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an undeniable truth that whether we hold the elections now or in three months' time, the result will be the same.

M. le président, ce que je constate, c'est que le renvoi de ces élections va soulager le choc d'une défaite additionnelle pour nos amis de l'autre côté de la Chambre car nous savons...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Are we anticipating what is going to happen in the elections? We are talking about the postponement; why the elections are being postponed? Are we anticipating the results or are we talking about why the elections are being postponed? The hon. Minister said it, because he has to review the law.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have finished my speech.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Before hon. Jhugroo speaks, Members have had the spirit on which they have to speak, the scope of the debate.

(1.00 a.m.)

Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien): M. le président, *it is not a sad day today*. Aujourd'hui, nous sommes dans une situation identique à celle de juin 2003. Pendant le débat sur le Local Government Bill de 2003, un amendement avait été proposé au Local Government Act de 1984 pour le renvoi des élections villageoises.

I wish here, Mr Speaker, Sir, to quote what the then Minister of Local Government, hon. Lesjongard, had said in his intervention during the debate. Let me quote -

“Members of this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, will appreciate that with all the major changes that will be ongoing after the passing of the Local Government Bill, it would not be appropriate and practical to organise Village Council elections during that transition period and it would be futile to elect members to serve for only a few months before the new proposed Municipal Councils elections to be held next year. On the other hand, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is necessary to come forward urgently with this amendment Bill so that the election of the president and the vice president of the district councils could be held between the 01 and 07 July next as provided in this existing Local Government Act”.

On that day, this was not a sad day? Je voudrais dire, M. le président, qu'on est aujourd'hui dans une situation similaire et ça va être futile et inapproprié d'organiser les élections municipales et villageoises dans une situation où le ministre d'administration régionale, mon ami l'honorable Hervé Aimée, *is brainstorming with a view to propose a new Local Government Bill.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of the Opposition will have to agree, just as they did in year 2003 - *zot bisin vote dans même logique!*

Après la défaite du MMM le 05 mai 2010, le gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir aurait pu organiser les élections municipales, mais nous avons pensé dans l'intérêt du pays et notre priorité était de faire face à la crise mondiale. Ce gouvernement viendra avec le Local Government Bill pour élargir l'espace démocratique. De par mon expérience, M. le président, ayant servi la ville de Vacoas-Phoenix en tant que maire pendant deux mandats sous la bannière MSM/MMM, je dis que nous sommes sûrs que dans le Local Government Bill, les collectivités locales auront plus d'autonomie dans la gestion de leur région. Si le MMM ne voit pas cet amendement comme ce fut le cas en juin 2003, c'est bien une preuve, M. le président, que le langage du MMM dans le gouvernement diffère celui dans l'opposition.

Je suis tout à fait d'accord, M. le président, avec le point avancé par l'honorable ministre Mohamed, que nous ne pouvons pas continuer avec cette confusion d'avoir deux lois, celles de 1989 et 2003. Donc, M. le président, en repoussant les élections municipales, ça nous permet non seulement d'éclairer la population dans son ensemble, mais démontre aussi la volonté de ce gouvernement de faire les choses dans leur juste perspective.

Merci, M. le président.

(1.06 a.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) : M. le président, l'objet principal de ce projet de loi est non seulement le renvoi des élections au niveau des collectivités locales à l'année prochaine, mais aussi l'extension des mandats des conseillers au niveau des collectivités locales jusqu'en 2011. Je pense, M. le président, qu'il ne faut pas mal comprendre le discours du *Leader* de l'opposition. Il a démontré son désaccord profond sur ce projet de loi sans tomber dans l'hystérie. Il faudrait remonter le temps. Il y a certains membres qui sont toujours présents dans cette Chambre quand on avait voté un amendement, présenté par l'ancien gouvernement ; l'hystérie qui avait régné à l'intérieur de cette Chambre, l'honorable Boolell en est témoin, M. le président.

Mais ce qui diffère, aujourd'hui, j'ai écouté avec attention les orateurs qui ont pris la parole avant moi, c'est qu'ils donnent l'impression que la période de 2005 à 2010 n'a jamais existé dans ce pays. Hors, il y a eu cette période et, pendant cette période, des promesses ont été faites. Quand, aujourd'hui, j'entends qu'il y a une confusion avec l'existence de la loi de 1989 et la loi de 2003. Mais qui est à la source de cette confusion ? C'est l'ancien gouvernement parce qu'il était écrit noir sur blanc dans le programme électoral de 2005 que le Local Government Act de 2003 sera révoqué et remplacé par une nouvelle loi concernant l'organisation et le pouvoir des collectivités locales. Hors, cinq ans sont passés et, aujourd'hui, on nous demande d'amender deux lois, et c'est écrit dans le projet de loi qu'on a devant nous, la loi de 1989 et la loi 2003.

Autre différence, M. le président - et le *Leader* de l'opposition l'a souligné tout à l'heure dans son discours - quand nous avons renvoyé les élections entre 2000 et 2005, la loi avait déjà été votée au Parlement en 2003. Nous étions au stade de l'implémentation de la loi. L'implémentation a été dite avec toute sa complexité, M. le président. Aujourd'hui, on nous demande de renvoyer les élections sans aucune loi même pas une ébauche de la loi aujourd'hui présentée au Parlement. Ce qui m'amène ...

(Interruptions)

C'est ça la grande différence !

Ce qui m'amène à dire, permettez-moi, M. le président, de me servir de quelques paroles qui avaient été utilisées il y a cinq ans et demi de cela. Comme on dit dans le langage Créo : *baté rendé pas faire di mal*. Nous avons à faire à des poltrons qui ont peur des élections au niveau des collectivités locales.

Mr Speaker : L'honorable membre ne peut pas servir le mot 'poltron'.

Mr Lesjongard : M. le président, je retire le mot ‘poltron’, mais on avait servi de ce mot il y a cinq ans de cela.

(*Interruptions*)

La peur est là. La peur est visible, M. le président. Ils ont peur d’aller vers des élections au niveau des municipalités. C’est cela la pure vérité, M. le président.

(*Interruptions*)

Aujourd’hui, on nous demande de voter cette loi sans aucune garantie du ministre quand on va voter la loi concernant les collectivités locales. Il n’y a aucune assurance aujourd’hui, M. le président, donnée aux membres de cette Chambre quand, effectivement, on va voter cette loi et du reste je pense qu’on l’avait mentionné il y a quelque temps. Même les dotations budgétaires ne font aucune mention de ce qui va se passer l’année prochaine.

M. le président, nous avions voté une loi avant-gardiste et comme l’a dit, tout à l’heure, le *Leader* de l’opposition, nous espérons que l’actuel gouvernement viendra de l’avant avec une loi qui va décentraliser les collectivités locales. Quand nous avons vu que pendant ces cinq dernières années, il y a une centralisation de l’administration au niveau des collectivités locales, on a décrié tout cela pendant tout ce temps là. Aujourd’hui, M. le président, ils veulent étendre le mandat des conseillers au niveau des collectivités locales, des conseillers qui ont eu carton rouge de la population de Maurice. Nous disons non, M. le président, à cela. Nous disons non parce que, pour nous, la démocratie régionale doit être quelque chose de vivant. Les conseillers doivent pouvoir fonctionner correctement. Or, nous avons vu que, pendant ces derniers temps - et je prends à témoin l’honorable Reza Issack qui suffoquait à la mairie de Port Louis pendant un certain temps, qui se plaignait....

Mr Speaker: We are not discussing the details of the Bill. We are talking about the postponement and the reasons of the postponement. There is no need to discuss about the Local Government general policy. Please, I am just following the path that was created in 2003 by the then Speaker. I have all the documents.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, but Government is also requesting the extension of the mandate of the Municipal, District and Village Councillors. That was the point I was making, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, je vais terminer mon discours tout en soulignant que nous sommes totalement contre le renvoi de ces élections. Ce que nous demandons c’est que le gouvernement nous donne les élections au niveau des municipalités, M. le président.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Before the next speaker starts may I remind the House that tedious repetition of one's own arguments or the arguments of other Members who have already spoken is not allowed.

(1.14 a.m.)

The Minister of Tourism and Leisure (Mr N. Bodha): M. le président j'ai bien écouté le précédent orateur, mais je crois qu'il a frôlé l'hystérie quelquefois. Il avait pourtant bien commencé.

Let me just say, Mr Speaker, Sir, what he, himself, said on 02 July 2002 when he was, in fact, asking for a postponement in this House. He said -

‘Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to stress that there is no hidden agenda or anything mysterious, sinister or anti democratic with the amendment Bill’.

He said so. It is a question of the introduction of a new Bill. There was nothing sinister. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to be long. I think that my colleague, hon. Mohamed, had a good stand which is going to be mine as well.

I would like to say a few words. It is true that the 2003 Bill was voted here in Parliament, but the thing remains that the MSM/MMM Government, where I was a Member of the Government, did not promulgate all the clauses of that Bill for two years. Now, for whatever reasons, that is the fact that we did not, for two years, implement the Act and it is hon. Lesjongard who, himself, says later why. He says it is a very voluminous and complex document. He said that we need a transition period to enable all the relative arrangements....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, why did you use the words ‘*pa honté*’ when the Minister speaks?

Mr Baloomoody: Because he was part of the Government.

Mr Speaker: Don't use the word ‘*pa honté*’, you are in a sitting position, let him speak. Please, can you help the Chair?

Mr Baloomoody: I will try to help.

Mr Speaker: If you don't try to help the Chair, you know what the Chair will do.

Mr Bodha: What I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that we were part of the Government, but for two years, we did not implement the Act and my former colleague Minister explains why. He says about the document and then he says -

‘We need that period to enable all the relative arrangements and preparations to be made so that the major changes could effectively take place’

And he also says that problems like division of the districts, like demarcation of the boundaries, of the wards were complex problems. True is it that, for a number of years, much has not been done. This is a fact, but today we are also realising the complexity of the exercise and the financial implications of the exercise. We have to agree to this and I think we have made a calculation and it's more than half a billion rupees to implement this. What I wanted to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that today, when we see that we have an amendment for a postponement, this Government – let me say what this Government has done.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, listen to the debate, you will have to reply later on.

Mr Bodha: I am stating the facts.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the first session was on 18 May. It is good to know what we have done in 2010 and the debate on the President Address starts on 15 June. The debate on the Budget starts on 16 November and, for the first time, the Budget is at the end of the year which means that the question of having elections by the end of the year would have been practically impossible. It would have been impossible for any Government to have municipal elections in the wake of the general election. So, this issue of practicality is a very important one when we see the calendar, the way we have been working in this House since May. The other thing I said was the financial implication. Now we are asking for a postponement and, as my colleagues have said, we have had postponements over a number of years, postponement presented by Ministers of Labour Party, Ministers of the MSM party, Ministers of the MMM and Ministers of this Alliance.

(Interruptions)

Everyone has come to the House to say that we have this confusion in the law. Everybody, I think, on both sides of the House, wants to have a local democracy which is a reflection of the dynamic democracy that we have. I think that, on both sides of the House, we share these ideals. What we have to do for reason of practicability is to have this postponement and we know that our colleague is working on a Bill. Everybody knows that it is a very complex issue, everybody knows that we want to have a dynamic regional democracy. So, we need time.

I will go by what my colleague, hon. Mohamed has said, by what the Leader of the Opposition has said. He does not agree to the postponement, we are asking for a postponement. We have a majority in the House. What we all agree is that let us take time to

do what this country deserves and what our people deserve as regards local and regional democracy.

Thank you.

(1.18 a.m.)

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to what Members of the Government have to say on the Bill. I could not prevent myself from smiling while listening to my friend, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, who was trying to say how there is nothing undemocratic about what the Government is doing today. Since I am not as good an orator as my hon. friend, I find nothing better than to quote what he himself said in 2005 when he was part of the then Government which brought back the elections. This is what he said –

“Elections are the lifeblood of any democracy. Election delayed is a denial of democracy. Through some democratic trickery they have used and abused this Parliament.”

And to finish, he said –

“Today, I say it aloud before this august Assembly the very proposition, the very thought of trying to postpone this election would be a rape of democracy.”

Who are the rapists today, Mr Speaker, Sir? Rape of democracy, parliamentary trick to avoid holding elections, this is what is being proposed today in this august Assembly; it is a parliamentary trick to postpone elections. It could not be otherwise. Why do I say it is a trick? First of all, there is absolutely nothing in the Budget with respect of the new Local Government Bill. We just spent hours - days, I should say - on reviewing various items of expenditure. There is nothing about implementation of an apparent Bill which is still in progress, nothing to implement the conversion of villages into municipal council, nothing has been voted. That's why I think it is...

Mr Speaker: That point has been raised by hon. Nagalingum, please, do not repeat.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the difference between today and five years ago is very simple. When the *Alliance Sociale* came to Parliament five years ago, they were so sure, so convinced of winning the municipal council election that they brought forward the election from 2006 to 2005. Today, the same Government is so sure and convinced of losing the municipal election that they are postponing it for one more year.

Mr Speaker: I just stopped the Minister from talking about the results of the election.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said so...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am just saying what my learned friend, hon. Issack said –

“Si les élections municipales avaient eu lieu aujourd’hui - and that was in 2008 - le MMM remporterait Port Louis 30:0 »

We have just finished general elections in 2010. The five municipal councils are located in the five towns where the MMM won 17 seats and *l’Alliance de l’Avenir* only 12. 12 elected Members against 17 elected Members! That’s why the Government knows it will lose the whole municipal elections.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is persisting in what I have asked him not to do.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I have made my point. I would end by reminding all the Members of this august Assembly that we have taken an oath when we were elected to uphold this Constitution. Section 1 of the Constitution...

Mr Speaker: We are not discussing the Constitution now. Sorry!

Mr Uteem: That’s what he said. I am quoting section 1 -

“Mauritius shall be a Sovereign democratic State which shall be known as a Republic of Mauritius.”

Section 57 subsection 2 of the Constitution entrench the right to hold general elections every five years and I would hope that, during the course of the tenure of this Government, an appropriate legislation will be brought to amend the Constitution to entrench and enshrine the right to have local elections every five years in this country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(1.26 a.m.)

Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened with due attention to my hon. colleague of the Opposition who just took the floor. What is sad to note, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that my hon. colleague, as always, is obsessed by elections. He is, unfortunately, not at all concerned about the advancement of local democracy in this country. He has not pronounced a single word about the state of affairs governing local legislation since the introduction, promulgation of certain sections of the Local Government Act of 2003.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill which is under scrutiny is in regard to amendments to both Local Government Acts of 1989 and 2003, specifically with regard to the elections of

municipal, district and village councillors, to the election of Mayors, Deputy Mayors; Chairman, Vice-Chairman of district councils; Chairman, Vice-Chairman of village councils. This is what the Bill under scrutiny is all about, as evidenced, Mr Speaker, Sir, by countries which stand today as real benchmarks in as far as advancement of democracy is concerned.

Mr Speaker: Of local democracy, the hon. Member means.

Mr Hossen: It is of democracy ...

Mr Speaker: We are talking about local democracy.

Mr Hossen: Yes. It is an undisputed and an uncontested fact that local democracy is the best form of democracy. Local democracy responds to the urgent needs and aspirations of local communities both in the urban and rural areas.

Mr Speaker: Come back to the Bill and say what is wrong with the Bill as it exists now!

Mr Hossen: Local democracy, Mr Speaker, Sir, responds at best to the new challenges of sustainable development.

Mr Speaker: No. There is a Bill which exists from 1989, another from 2003, there is a confusion. Speak about that! There is no need to have a long debate on sustainable development.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for the remarks. It is my intention, in fact, to come to that issue. The hon. Leader of the Opposition, in his speech - I did not note down his exact words - qualified that piece of legislation, which was introduced in 2003, as a superb piece of legislation. Only a few weeks afterwards, that legislation could not be promulgated. When we put into practice the four sections of that 2003 legislation, which was promulgated, we noted major inconsistencies with the previous 1989 legislation. Can I be allowed, Mr Speaker, Sir, to mention a few of these inconsistencies?

The first major inconsistency, Mr Speaker, Sir, pertains to one of the main attributes of local authorities, that is, to care for market and fairs. In as far as this major attribution is concerned, according to section 60 of the Local Government Act of 1989 -

“Allocation of stalls in a market or fair should be effected after calling of tenders.”

Whereas, according to section 45 of the Local Government Act 2003, the municipal council may, by a *contrat à durée déterminée*, authorise any person to occupy any stall. Such a provision, Mr Speaker, Sir, is devoid of fairness.

Another major inconsistency pertains to the grant of leave accorded to councillors and, allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to refer to that. Normally, according to the Local

Government Act of 1989, provision is made that a councillor can absent himself for a consecutive period of six months, whereas the Local Government Act of 2003 provides a period of three consecutive months without prior authorisation from the council. But that Local Government Act of 2003...

Mr Speaker: Up to now, the hon. Member is just quoting the difference between the two Acts. In one case, it was six months; in the other case, it is three consecutive months. In one case, it was calling of tender and, in the other case, it was *contrat à durée déterminée*. These are the two laws. The hon. Member cannot now enter into a debate to say which one was good and which one was not good. He has to point out that the Minister is postponing the elections, because there is confusion in both laws. If he knows about the confusion, then he can debate about it. Otherwise, if he just quotes the difference between the two laws, that's not on.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is precisely the point I was trying to make. On this specific issue of leave of councillors, there is one pertinent example at the level of the Local Council of Port Louis itself, whereby a councillor who has been absent from the meetings of the whole council, absent from meetings of all committees for the whole duration of his mandate, yet, has not been disqualified according to the provisions of the Local Government Act of 2003. The same councillor who has not shown any respect towards those electors who have elected him to be their representative at the level of the Local Council of Port Louis, who shows no respect for local democracy, finds himself within the Opposition today, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

There are so many new issues, which I mentioned in the context of sustainable development, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No.

Mr Hossen: There are so many issues...

Mr Speaker: I have said no.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is known that the holding of municipal elections requires substantial investment of public funds, which amounts to some Rs90 m., and also the holding of village council elections requires some Rs110 m. A learned friend of the Opposition just mentioned that we have been dedicating much time towards the approval of the Budget.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should not repeat the arguments.

Mr Hossen: Holding of elections this year would require some Rs200 m. in terms of organisation pertaining to those elections. This is one of the main reasons. Mr Speaker, Sir, taking on board all new challenges facing local democracy, all new urgent needs and aspirations of local communities, both in urban and rural areas, a new legislation is in the pipeline. Everybody who has at heart the interest of our country, especially as far as management of public funds is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, would agree that a postponement of the elections for next year, under the new legislation which is under preparation, is most desirable.

I would like, before ending, Mr Speaker, Sir, to associate myself with what hon. Ministers Mohamed and Bodha, as well as my learned friend, hon. Jhugroo have said.

Thank you very much for your attention, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I will have to remind the House again that arguments, which have already been made, cannot be repeated.

(1.37 a.m.)

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): That is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I stand to be guided by you.

Quels sont les faits? Les faits c'est que nous sommes en l'an 2010 et, selon les dispositions de la clause 11 de la loi de 2003, les élections doivent être organisées cette année, en 2010, d'ici le 31 décembre. Les élections générales eurent lieu le 05 mai 2010, et l'attente au sein du public c'était que, tout comme après les élections de 1991, le MSM/MMM allant aux urnes pour les élections municipales après les législatives, tout comme en 1995 ce fut le cas - et vous vous souvenez très bien du contexte, M. le président - tout comme en l'an 2000 - c'est la pratique consacrée - un nouveau gouvernement arrive et cherche à prendre un nouveau départ, se basant sur l'élan que lui octroie la victoire aux législatives, pour prendre le contrôle des municipales, et comme cela il y a une cohérence entre l'action municipale et l'action du gouvernement central.

En 1991, 1995, 2000 et 2005, c'est la pratique toujours, qu'après les élections générales, l'on aille vers les municipales. Et, donc, la population s'attendait à ce que ce soit, une fois de plus, la même chose.

Et puis, que s'est-il passé ? Rien ! De mai à juin, de juin à juillet, au mois d'août, au mois de septembre, rien ! Ce sont les faits ! Il y a eu certaines rumeurs à l'effet que le bon ministre Aimée allait faire une grande réforme, mais ce ne furent que des rumeurs jusqu'à ce qu'il y a de cela quelques semaines - je crois que nous étions près de la fin du mois de

novembre - il y a eu une déclaration du ministre Aimée, au cours d'une interview de presse, confirmée par le conseil des Ministres, et puis ce projet de loi qui est daté du 02 décembre.

Donc, la première chose que je tiens à dire, c'est que le procédé adopté, la façon d'agir de ce gouvernement est tout à fait inacceptable, parce que cela équivaut à tenir la démocratie en otage. Citez-moi une des grandes démocraties au monde, les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, l'Inde, La France, l'Angleterre, où cela aurait été possible d'attendre cinq semaines des échéances pour venir dire que l'on va reporter les élections !

Donc, le premier argument que je voudrais présenter à la Chambre est que - dans la manière d'agir vis-à-vis des équipes qui sont maintenant dans les municipalités et qui ne pouvaient pas gérer normalement les villes dans l'attente imminente de la fin de leurs mandats; de l'annonce des élections vis-à-vis de tous les partis politiques y compris les activistes du Parti Travailiste, du PMSD et du MSM qui attendaient les élections n'importe quand; conformément aux principes démocratiques de ce pays vis-à-vis de tous les partis et vis-à-vis de tous les citoyens de ce pays - le procédé adopté équivaut à tenir la démocratie en otage et il doit être condamné.

Il n'empêche qu'aujourd'hui, à la mi-décembre, l'on nous présente un projet de loi qui prétend reporter les élections à 2011. Pourquoi? Quels sont les arguments avancés par le ministre, l'honorable Aimée? Nous nageons en plein surréalisme ; 'réforme', le mot est lâché. Le ministre Aimée nous parle d'une grande réforme qu'il va faire et qui a d'énormes implications comme toute réforme majeure et, donc, on ne peut envisager des élections à la veille des grandes réformes qui vont être présentées au pays. Mais quelles réformes ? Y a-t-il quelqu'un dans cette Chambre, autre que le Ministre Aimée, qui sait de quelle réforme nous parlons ? Cette réforme a-t-elle été étudiée par le conseil des ministres ? Nul rapport dans la presse ! Cette réforme a-t-elle accouché d'un projet de loi visé par le Parquet ? Certainement pas !

Cette réforme a-t-elle été présentée au public, circulée pour qu'il y ait des consultations ? Nullement ! Existe-t-elle cette réforme, M. le président? Nous sommes en plein hypothèse, spéculations et conjectures. Existe-t-elle cette réforme ? Quel est l'argument essentiel ? L'argent unique qui nous est présenté pour reporter les élections. Personne ne l'a vue ! Le pire, M. le président, c'est que mis, à part le ministre Aimée - dont je ne mets pas en doute les bonnes intentions de présenter une réforme - qui d'autre s'est engagé en faveur de cette réforme ? Honnêtement, M. le président, je me trompe peut-être, mais je n'ai pas entendu une déclaration claire, sans équivoque du Premier ministre, annonçant une réforme majeure pour 2011. Au contraire, alors qu'ici on nous demande d'étendre le mandat des

conseillers en place jusqu'à la veille d'une date hypothétique, où auront lieu les élections, le Premier ministre, lui, au cours de nos échanges à l'occasion des débats budgétaires, a dit que si cela ne tenait qu'à lui, il fermerait tous les cinq conseils municipaux.

Y-a-il eu un engagement clair, ferme, sans équivoque et transparent du Premier ministre en faveur d'une quelconque réforme, même celle que chérit le ministre Aimée ? Certainement pas ! D'ailleurs, le Premier ministre n'est même pas là aujourd'hui pour ce débat.

(Interruptions)

Ah non, le projet qu'il chérit ! N'est-il pas révélateur, M. le président, alors que l'on se propose de reporter les élections municipales ? Ce qui n'est pas une mince affaire en démocratie ? Imaginez-vous cela se passant à New Delhi, à Washington ou à Paris ! Ce n'est pas une mince affaire ! Le No. 2 du gouvernement n'intervient pas dans les débats. Les membres du *front bench*, les deux vice-Premier ministres ne se prononcent pas.

Ils vont voter, mais mon argument, M. le président, est que si c'est une réforme que soutient le gouvernement qui vient justifier le report des élections, l'on se serait attendu que ce soit les principaux représentants du gouvernement, qui viennent nous dire ici : « Ecoutez, nous nous engagerons qu'il y aura une réforme dans la première partie de 2011 et les élections dans la deuxième partie. »

La deuxième chose qui m'est resté au travers de la gorge, M. le président, c'est que l'on ne sait pas pourquoi il y a eu report. Cette réforme, personne ne sait si elle existe et quand elle existera. Et ce qui me confirme, M. le président ...

(Interruptions)

dans mes inquiétudes et dans mes doutes, c'est que de 2005 à 2010, bien que le gouvernement d'alors s'était engagé de défaire ce qu'avait fait le MMM-MSM ...

Mr Speaker : L'honorable membre répète beaucoup les mêmes arguments.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo : J'explique pourquoi, et là, je ne répète pas. J'explique pourquoi, aujourd'hui, l'opinion publique mauricienne, comme moi, serait tout à fait justifiée de mettre en doute la volonté, la réalité d'une réforme annoncée. Pendant cinq ans, il n'y a rien eu. Tout en connaissant la détermination du ministre Aimée, pourquoi croirait-on qu'en six mois, ce qui n'a pas été possible en cinq ans, deviendrait soudainement possible ?

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, qu'a-t-on entendu ? Nous avons entendu quatre intervenants du côté de la majorité. Le ministre Mohamed a-t-il parlé d'une réforme ? S'est-t-

il engagé en faveur d'une réforme ? Non ! Je l'écoutais avec beaucoup d'attention, comme toujours. Ce qu'il nous a dit ...

Mr Speaker: To be fair to him, he said there is confusion in the law.

Mr Obeegadoo: Permettez, M. le président ! Ce que j'ai entendu ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Deepalsing, can you keep quiet, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Ce que j'ai entendu le Ministre Mohamed dire c'est que la loi, telle qu'elle existe, n'est pas bonne et qu'il faut l'améliorer et qu'il faudrait qu'il y ait un consensus pour améliorer une loi qui n'est pas bonne. Mais, il n'a pas parlé de réforme.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : C'est une question d'interprétation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Après le ministre Mohamed, l'honorable Jhugroo ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, it is 1.48 a.m., we started at 10 o'clock the morning!

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, je veux simplement étayer mes propos en disant que l'honorable Jhugroo non plus n'a pas pu parler d'une réforme.

Troisième argument, ces élections, nous les reportons à quand ? Selon le libellé du projet de loi 2011, je ne veux pas répéter, car quelqu'un d'autre l'a dit avant moi, dans les dotations budgétaires...

Mr Speaker: Mais vous vous répétez!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Allons-nous, M. le président,...

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Member continues like this, I will have to ask him to discontinue the speech.

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, allons-nous vers des élections surprises dès le mois de février sans qu'il y ait de réforme ? Allons-nous vers les élections dans la deuxième partie de 2011 ou allons-nous vers un nouveau report à la fin de 2011, en nous disant qu'il faut encore du *brainstorming* sur une réforme éventuelle ? Personne ne le sait ! Si, M. le président, il y avait eu un projet de loi, très clair, un projet de réforme ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. I have called the attention of the House and of the hon. Member that he has been repeating the arguments of others, he is repeating himself now and if he continues like this, I will kindly request him to terminate his speech here.

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, je n'ai nullement l'intention de me répéter, si vous me permettez, tout ce que je disais...

Mr Speaker: I am the Chair! I....

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo : Ce que je dis c'est que si, en même temps que ce projet de loi était présenté, il y avait un document sur la réforme, énonçant ces grands principes, même si ce n'était pas un projet de loi, nous disant clairement quelle serait cette réforme, si la date des élections municipales était indiquée de manière plus précise, si l'opposition avait été invitée à discuter du libellé d'une réforme, je ne dis pas que le MMM aurait été dupe, mais, au moins, peut-être le gouvernement aura pu convaincre l'opinion publique, qu'il y avait vraiment une raison valable pour le report de ces élections.

(Interruptions)

Au lieu de cela, M. le président, on nous dit tout simplement que les élections n'auraient pas été possibles, mais il y a une chose que je voudrais rappeler à tout le monde. Les élections municipales de 2005, juste après les élections générales, avaient été organisées sur la base de cette même loi qui n'est pas bonne. Il n'y a pas eu de changement après. Donc, il fut possible en 2005 pour le gouvernement travailliste d'organiser des élections sur la base de cette même loi. Que nous dit-on ? Cela ne rend pas possible l'organisation des élections municipales en 2010.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je pense qu'il n'y a personne aujourd'hui à Maurice qui croit vraiment que ces élections doivent être reportées à cause d'une loi qui serait défectueuse. Tout le monde, même les partisans du Parti Travailiste savent que si les élections sont reportées, c'est pour éviter l'embarras d'une consultation électorale où le gouvernement devrait se soumettre au jugement de la population et risquer que l'élan gouvernemental soit brisé. Je ne parle pas des résultats des élections, je dis que dans toutes les consultations électorales, il y a ce risque et tout le monde à Maurice sait que c'est de cela dont nous parlons.

Je vais terminer en disant qu'aujourd'hui ce dont nous témoignons constitue un grave précédent. Cela est de très mauvais augure pour le reste du mandat de ce gouvernement en matière de respect de la démocratie.

M. le président, ce pays n'appartient pas au gouvernement du jour. La démocratie n'est jamais la propriété du gouvernement du jour, mais le gouvernement lui est redéposable. Donc, ce gouvernement n'a pas le droit moral aujourd'hui de reporter ces élections. Alors, dernière remarque, la demande de l'opposition au gouvernement, malgré les ricanements de certains, c'est que l'on rende au peuple ce qui lui est dû moralement : le droit de décider démocratiquement de qui, selon le peuple, devrait gérer les municipales.

Pour nous, ce projet de loi, M. le président, n'est rien d'autre qu'une manœuvre bassement politique, qui vise à reporter le jour où le gouvernement devra se soumettre au jugement du peuple. Pourtant ils ne perdent rien à attendre et en cela ce projet de loi ne mérite rien d'autre que du mépris et j'en ai terminé, M. le président.

(1.55 a.m.)

Mr R. Issack (Fourth Member for Stanley and Rose Hill): M. le président, avec votre aimable autorisation, puis-je me permettre d'être le porte-parole du maire et des conseillers municipaux de Vacoas/Phoenix, pour rendre un hommage, bref mais grand, à un conseiller municipal, en l'occurrence M. Peter Harvey Grant, qui vient d'être inhumé. Il a exhalé son dernier souffle mardi. C'était un employé modèle de la mairie de Curepipe et il a été conseiller municipal à Vacoas/Phoenix. C'était un homme discret, effacé même, anonyme, mais très efficace. Je souhaite présenter au nom du maire et des conseillers municipaux de Vacoas/Phoenix, nos sincères condoléances à tous ceux que ce deuil afflige.

Ce soir, que n'avons-nous pas entendu? Il y a un amendement, rien qu'un! Que demande-t-on? Que demande le ministre des Administrations Régionales? Que les élections municipales et villageoises se tiennent en 2011, l'année prochaine, dans quelques semaines! Je comprends les appréhensions de l'opposition. C'est légitime, mais injustifié. Ils ont déjà, eux aussi, renvoyé des élections. Est-ce que nous ne pouvons pas nous aussi faire la même chose? Mon ami, l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed, vient de me dire, quel mal y a-t-il si on embrasse la même fille?

(Interruptions)

Avec respect quand même! Et puis on donne un mauvais nom à la fille! Mais ce soir, comme je vous disais, que n'avons-nous pas entendu?

L'honorable Paul Bérenger, le *Leader* de l'opposition, parle de fanatisme politique. Il appréhende que nous ayons recours à des *funny tricks*, que nous voulions manipuler l'opinion publique. D'autres ont voulu faire accroire que nous avons peur d'une défaite. Il y en a même qui ont dit: 30-0.

M. le président, oui, j'ai dit en 2008 dans un contexte donné, il fallait donner un coup de fouet pour remonter et revigorer une équipe de conseillers. Oui, je l'ai dit et à l'époque je croyais dans ce que je disais. Et si aujourd'hui je le dis, est-ce qu'on va me croire? Et si aujourd'hui je vous dis, mais je sais que vous n'aimez pas qu'on...

Mr Speaker: L'honorable membre n'a pas le droit de le dire.

Mr Issack : ...vous donne des pronostiques. Mais c'est pourquoi je vous dis: est-ce qu'ils vont me croire si je le dis quel sera le résultat? On nous parle du viol de la démocratie ce soir. *Rape of democracy!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mon ami, l'honorable Nagalingum, va même jusqu'à dire que nous sommes *against basic principles of democracy*.

Je n'ai pas envie de suffoquer mon ami, l'honorable Lesjongard. Il nous accuse d'être des poltrons, nous avons peur, nous tombons dans l'hystérie.

(*Interruptions*)

Je viens d'entendre l'honorable Obeegadoo qui nous accuse de tenir la démocratie en otage. Il pose une question: quelle réforme apportons-nous? C'est comme un secret de polichinelle, c'est à croire que jamais on a parlé de cette réforme alors que c'est dans notre programme gouvernemental et, à plusieurs reprises, le ministre Hervé Aimée a parlé de ces réformes à la radio, dans la presse et nous avons une idée de ce qui nous attend. Nous voulons un approfondissement de la démocratie. Nous cherchons à approfondir la démocratie. M. le président ...

(*Interruptions*)

L'opposition n'a pas que le devoir d'opposer; l'opposition a aussi le devoir de proposer; l'opposition doit faire preuve de patriotisme. C'est une occasion pour l'opposition de prouver sa bonne foi, de coopérer, comme l'honorable ministre Bodha et l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed l'ont souhaité. On peut travailler ensemble. On peut réfléchir ensemble; on peut ensemble approfondir la démocratie régionale.

(*Interruptions*)

C'est une occasion de réaliser ensemble un même rêve ...

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Members are not taking this debate seriously.

Mr Issack: M. le président, nous venons de remporter une élection, nous venons de gagner une guerre. Est-ce que vous croyez que nous avons peur de perdre une bataille? Nous n'avons pas peur et le PMSD parle de '*resultat lor resultat, nou, nou coz victoire lor victoire!*'

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Issack: Aujourd'hui, nous avons entendu les membres de l'opposition exprimer leurs craintes, leurs appréhensions. Comme je vous ai dit, c'est légitime, mais injustifié. On ne renvoie pas les élections *sine die*. Les élections viendront en 2011.

(*Interruptions*)

Ils auront les élections mais avec, si vous me le permettez, une raclée en même temps!

Mr Speaker: Non! L'honorable membre persiste.

Mr Issack: M. le président, je fais un appel à l'opposition. Nous sommes tout aussi soucieux qu'eux pour l'approfondissement de notre démocratie. Nous sommes beaucoup plus soucieux de cet approfondissement de la démocratie. Nous aurons l'occasion d'approfondir cette démocratie, de réfléchir ensemble, de consolider la démocratie, mais ils ont à faire preuve non seulement de bonne foi, mais aussi d'un peu de patience. C'est tout ce que j'ai à dire et espérons que l'année prochaine on aura et les élections et une nouvelle loi.

Merci, M. le président.

(2.05 a.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, je vais essayer de ne pas être long. It is early in the morning et je vais résumer la situation au niveau de l'amendement que vient nous proposer le ministre Aimée. De ce côté de la Chambre, nous avons bien fait comprendre notre position. Nous sommes résolument contre le renvoi des élections municipales. Ce n'est pas seulement la voix des élus du MMM, c'est la voix des contribuables, parce que nous représentons ici aussi les contribuables de l'île Maurice des cinq villes et aussi ceux des régions rurales. Ils sont tous contre cet amendement que vient nous proposer l'honorable Aimée. J'ai écouté avec beaucoup d'attention mes amis *from the Government side*, mais leurs arguments ne tiennent pas debout.

Au fait, M. le président, l'Alliance de l'Avenir a bien préparé son coup. On ne peut dire un coup d'état, mais c'est peut-être un coup d'état contre les habitants des villes. Depuis plusieurs mois, ils ont préparé ce scénario. Je ne croyais pas à ces rumeurs de réforme, le *release of information* que nous allons créer telle ou telle ville Moi, je n'y croyais pas en voyant opérer ce gouvernement depuis les élections. Dans cette Chambre, l'Alliance de l'Avenir a la majorité parlementaire, quoique nous allions dire sur cette loi, *we are going to get through*. Ils ont la majorité, ils vont utiliser la MBC, je suis sûr mais, nous, nous allons être sur le terrain politique. Nous leur donnons rendez-vous sur le terrain politique et nous allons remporter.

(Interruptions)

Laissez-moi terminer, M. le président!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I did not know what the hon. Member was going to say.

Mr Bhagwan: You can't pre-empt what I am going to say, Mr Speaker, Sir. Everybody wants to go home at this time, but we want democracy ...

Mr Speaker: I knew what your intention, this is why ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: Nous voulons faire triompher la démocratie. C'est la démocratie qui doit triompher et avec ce projet de loi, la démocratie est en train de reculer. L'histoire va retenir – ce que nous avons fait en 2003, c'est que nous avons consolidé la démocratie – encore une fois que c'est une alliance Parti Travailleur/PMSD, tout comme en 1969, qui vient encore une fois bafouer la démocratie. C'est l'histoire avec cette fois-ci *a new alliance* où je suis sûr que certains sont très mal à l'aise.

M. le président, tout à l'heure la presse va mentionner le renvoi des élections municipales et cela causera la colère des habitants des villes qui ont besoin d'un changement et ils vont payer très cher ce renvoi des élections. M. le président, at this very early hour in the morning, this is our position, we are dead against. I won't go into details, I know what would be the consequences.

(*Interruptions*)

I will make my speech outside later. So, this is our position, *et je le redis : l'opposition - le MMM - est contre le renvoi de ces élections municipales. Nous leur donnons rendez-vous sur le terrain politique !*

Merci, M. le président.

(2.10 a. m.)

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to thank all hon. Members who have taken part in this debate. Many of them have had the opportunity to serve as Municipal and District Councillors, like myself, and I have listened carefully to the point raised, especially by the Opposition. I must admit that most of what was said on the other side was to be expected.

M. le président, on est devant cette Chambre, aujourd'hui, non pas pour penser certainement aux élections, mais c'est surtout à l'amendement qui nous concerne aujourd'hui. Qu'est-ce qu'on a demandé? On a demandé un renvoi. Il y a plusieurs questions qu'on peut se poser, M. le président. Est-ce que c'est la première fois qu'on a un amendement dans ce Parlement? Est-ce que c'est seul le Parti Travailleur ou l'Alliance de l'Avenir ou c'est aussi le MMM qui a apporté des amendements ici? Donc, M. le président, pour moi, c'est plus un débat politique. La politique c'est bien, mais qu'en pense le petit peuple? Est-ce que le jeu

d'échecs qu'on a ici entre opposition et gouvernement profite au peuple? Ce que nous faisons actuellement c'est pour nous donner le temps de préparer la nouvelle loi que personne n'y croit. Alors je dis qu'il y a des gens qui ont des yeux pour voir mais qui ne voient pas ; il y a des gens qui ont des oreilles pour entendre et qui n'entendent pas. Donc, c'est politique, matin et soir ! Mais le petit peuple ne déjeune pas de la politique. Ils sont contents d'avoir des représentants au Parlement, mais pour travailler pour leur bien-être. Donc, cet amendement nous donne le temps de faire notre travail et je m'excuse de le dire, ici. Il y a beaucoup qui ne font pas leur travail comme il faut, c'est sûr !

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the year 2002, District and Village Council elections were due under the Local Government Act of 1989; the elections were postponed to 2003 by the Act No.16 of 2002. *Ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, c'est le discours qui a été fait en 2002.*

(Interruptions)

Ils lisent aussi le journal!

Mr Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Aimée: The mandate of the existing District and Village Council was consequently extended to 2003. The Bill was introduced in Parliament by hon. Lesjongard, the then Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues. In 2003, by the Act No.10 of 2003, the District and Village Council elections were further postponed to 2004. The mandate of the existing District and Village councillor was extended to 2004. The Bill was introduced in Parliament by hon. Lesjongard, the then Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues. Under the new Local Government Act of 2003, introduced by the then Government, Municipal Council elections were due to be held in 2004.

M. le président, this is not the first time that an amendment has been brought to push back Local Government elections, but when the argument put forward by the previous Government to bring a similar amendment to postpone them, at that time, *M. le président*, the Leader of the Opposition talked about *un petit renvoi* of the Village Council elections, precisely, because the new Local Government Bill was being prepared at that time. But then, in 2003 when the new legislation was introduced in Parliament, it turned out that *le petit renvoi* became a *renvoi définitif*, with the abolition of Village Council.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I do not have the debate in front of me; the hon. Minister must assume his responsibility.

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: *Bane menace pas faire moi peur!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Aimée: In 2004, another amendment was brought by the then Government led by the present Leader of the Opposition to delay Local Government elections, once again, by two years. What brought about this change of the direction was, of course, the defeat of the then Government in Rivière du Rempart by-election. An excuse was given, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it was not possible to push back the elections by only one year because the year 2005 was supposedly to be the year of general elections, and supposedly it would not be wise to hold the elections in the same year. Mr Speaker, Sir, let us be clear, if the MMM had wanted to hold municipal elections, they could have done so in early 2004 as the Electoral Commission had already submitted new regional boundaries, but they decided not to go ahead. Of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, we know what happened in 2005; not only did the Labour Party win power along with its *Alliance Sociale* but further, a new amendment to the Local Government Act, this time, to reintroduce Municipal and Village Council elections in 2005. That was immediately brought to the august Assembly. In fact, this was the first Bill put before Parliament after the elections of July 2005. Mr Speaker, Sir, if at that time we had not taken the decision to amend the law in 2005, you know what would have happened? The Local Government Act 2003 takes care only of town councils; district and village councils were not in. If we would have done an election for municipal council, then somebody could have stand up in Flacq and said that the project of the Local Government Act 2003 was for 12 villages and 12 cities, that is, Mauritius becoming Town Councils.

Mr Chairperson, I heard the Opposition say : *nou pas sûr pou gagne élections l'année prochaine*. Je vais, par rapport à ce qui est dit dans le programme gouvernemental qu'on aura un *Local Government Act* qui va être révolutionnaire. Cela a été dit lors des débats sur le *Presidential Address*. Ils ont peut-être raté cela, parce qu'ils n'étaient pas là.

Mr Chairperson, the Minister of Finance has already stated in the Budget Speech that financial provision is being made for the holding of Local Government election in 2011. This is proof of the goodwill of the Government not to delay this election any more than necessary. This is in stark contrast to the amendment of 2004 presented by the previous regime. Today, we have inherited a situation, where local authorities in Mauritius are governed by two laws; the 1989 Local Government Act and the 2003 Local Government Act. This is so because of the irresponsibility of the previous Government which was in a hurry to introduce the rural tax without doing all the necessary groundwork, Mr Speaker, Sir. This has now left us in a complicated legal position.

Let me quote some extracts from the Hansard about what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said when the amendment was brought in 2005, leading to the new municipal and village council elections to be held in the same year.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I quote -

“I don’t think it is good for Mauritius to rush in that way after general elections in 2005. So, we are not ashamed at all of the fact that 2005, being the year of general elections, we thought it better for Mauritius to have the municipal elections in 2006.”

This is a different thing. He also stated -

“I still do not think that it is fair play...”

Mr Speaker: Order! Address the Chair! Let me follow.

Mr Aimée: He also stated -

“I still don’t think that it is fair play on the country...”

That is, he wants the country to *respirer*.

“...which has just gone through general elections, for selfish political reasons, to rush to municipal elections.”

Mr Chairperson, I am, therefore, sure that the MMM will be happy that we have taken their advice this time. Being given that it is only a small amendment, I will stop here and, with this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XVIII of 2010) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XVIII of 2010) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 11 January at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 2.28 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 14 December 2010 at 11.30 a.m.