

Debate No. 35 of 28.11.06**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION -CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN**

(No. B/1486) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence & Home Affairs, Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms and Minister of Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to climatic changes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Environment Commission, information as to whether –

- (a) a meeting is scheduled to be held, as per section 5 of the EPA 2002, and if not, why not, and
- (b) the National Climatic Changes Action Plan is regularly updated and reviewed and, if so, details thereof.

Reply (The Minister of Environment & National Development Unit): The National Environment Commission will meet soon to consider, amongst others, the new National Environment Policy being finalised by my Ministry, which includes pertinent issues on climate change.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that a ‘Climate Change Action Plan’ was prepared in December 1998, highlighting response measures that may be taken in the Republic of Mauritius to curb the negative impacts of climate change in various sectors.

Major findings from the report ‘A Climate Change Action Plan’ were reviewed before inclusion in the Initial National Communication and submitted to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat in April 1999. Mitigation and adaptation options that need to be taken into consideration for implementation were identified.

As a follow-up, in September 2004, a Technology Needs Assessment Report was prepared to identify appropriate and relevant technologies, needed to implement activities/findings of the Climate Change Action Plan.

Furthermore, in May 2006, a Stocktaking Exercise and Stakeholders Consultation on Climate Change Activities were completed.

BPML – LAND LEASE

(No. B/1538) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius (Ltd), information as to whether one Mrs P. D., residing in the vicinity of Curepipe, is the beneficiary of a lease for a plot of land from BPML.

Reply: The answer to the question is in the negative.

**STATE INFORMATICS LTD – BOARD, TRIPS BY
CHAIRMAN & GENERAL MANAGER**

(No. B/1539) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications whether, in regard to the Board of the State Informatics Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the date on which –

- (a) it was constituted;
- (b) its first sitting was held, and
- (c) its Chairperson and Director travelled to Dubai and Paris respectively, indicating the outcome of the missions.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the Board of Directors of the State Informatics Ltd has had members sitting on the Board at all times since the coming into office of the present Government. Between the period July to September 2005, five out of the seven Directors of the Board of the State Informatics Ltd resigned. Thereafter, two Directors, including the Chairman, were appointed in February 2006. In May 2006, one Director resigned. On the same day, another Director was appointed on the Board. On 06 June 2006, five new Directors were appointed. A Director resigned on 18 August 2006 and a new Director was appointed on the same day.

As for part (b) of the question, the first sitting of the Board meeting was held as far back as 1989 and the number of meetings for the last three years are as follows – five in 2004, four in 2005 and four in 2006, the fourth meeting of the Board being scheduled on 29 November 2006.

Concerning part (c), I take it that the hon. Member is referring to the General Manager of the State Informatics Ltd and not to the Director as mentioned in the question.

The Chairman and General Manager of the State Informatics Ltd effected three unauthorised trips. Firstly, to Paris from 02 to 06 April 2006, secondly to Caïro from 02 to 05 May 2006, and thirdly, to Dubaï from 20 to 23 August 2006. These unauthorised trips cost Rs271,287 for the unauthorised Paris trip, Rs173,420 for the authorised Caïro trip and Rs138,000 for the authorised Dubaï trip. As for the outcome of the missions, for the Paris and Caïro unauthorised trips, I am informed that the Board of Directors has not been apprised of any outcome. As for the unauthorised trip to Dubaï, I am informed that it has had negative impact in that firstly, it has adversely affected the Memorandum of Understanding which Government had signed with Oracle in May 2006 and, secondly, it has resulted in the closure of the Oracle Office in Mauritius. With a view to mitigating damages, I have had, not later than last week, to reassure Mr D. Lopez Fafie, the Oracle vice President and Managing Director for Africa, of the willingness of Government to go ahead with the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and derive maximum benefits therefrom.

What is more disturbing, I am informed that, soon after the Dubaï mission, the General Manager organised a party to celebrate the 17th anniversary of State Informatics Ltd, without informing any of its Directors. I am also informed that State Informatics Ltd ordered a car costing Rs2.3 m. for use by the then non-executive Chairperson without seeking the approval of the Board or informing it of same, thus departing from basic principles of good governance and sound financial management.

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY - PETROLEUM RETAILERS ASSOCIATION - MEETING

(No. B/1540) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether he will state if he recently had a meeting with members of the Petroleum Retailers Association and, if so, will he state the date and the outcome thereof.

Reply: A meeting was held under my chairmanship on 10 November 2006 with representatives of the Petrol Retailers Association (PRA). The PRA made a request to review their profit margin on the sale of gas cylinders. The matter is being looked into by my Ministry.

ICT AUTHORITY - LAWYERS

(No. B/1541) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications whether, in regard to the lawyers whose services have been retained by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) their names, and
- (b) the total amount of money paid as fees to each of them.

Reply: I am advised that since its establishment in July 2002, the IC T Authority has availed of the services of lawyers on the following three modes –

- (a) a retainer basis;
- (b) for cases before the ICT Appeal Tribunal and the Court, and
- (c) for other legal matters.

I am also informed by the ICT Authority that, regarding cases before the Tribunal and the Court, the Authority pays such fees as it considers reasonable and justified in relation to the complexity of the cases subject to a maximum of Rs150,000 per case.

Information pertaining to the number of lawyers, their names and the fees paid to them for the period 2003-2006 is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

BREAD – SELLING PRICE

(No. B/1542) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-operatives whether, in regard to bread, he

will state if Government is proposing to revise the selling price thereof in the coming weeks and, if so, the reasons thereof.

Reply: Government is not proposing to review the selling price of bread in the coming weeks.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/1543) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to whether its Chairperson has been the legal representative of the Emirates Airline.

(Withdrawn)

EASSY SUBMARINE CABLE PROJECT

(No. B/1544) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications whether, in regard to the EASSy submarine cable project, he will state if Mauritius will be a party thereto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the level of investment, and
- (b) who will be investing.

Reply: In reply to PQ No B/872, I had informed the House that, at the meeting of ICT Ministers of Eastern and Southern Africa held in June 2006, it was, *inter alia*, resolved that the NEPAD ICT Broadband Infrastructure Network be expanded to incorporate the Republic of Mauritius. It was also decided at that meeting that the Protocol on the Policy and Regulatory Framework for NEPAD ICT Broadband Infrastructure for Eastern and Southern Africa be signed in Kigali, Rwanda during the third week of August 2006.

Since then, two Protocol Signing Ceremonies had been held in Kigali, Rwanda and in Cape Town, South Africa in August and October 2006 respectively and nine countries out of 23 participating countries in the

EASSy project, namely Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana and Zimbabwe had signed the Protocol.

I have the pleasure to inform the House that, on 20 November 2006, at a signing ceremony organised in Mauritius under the auspices of the African Union, Mauritius has become the tenth signatory member State of the Protocol.

This project started in November 2001 when a group of private telecom operators clubbed together to set up the optical fibre cable. The NEPAD Heads of State and Government implementation Committee also took interest in project as from March 2003 and in November 2004, the 12th Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee adopted the NEPAD ICT Broadband Infrastructure for Eastern and Southern Africa as a flagship NEPAD project. All the while, however, Mauritius was not included in the project.

Had this Government not taken bold corrective measures through sustained negotiations since November 2005 to redress the non starter status of Mauritius in EASSy, not only we would have missed out on the unique opportunity to bring international communication costs in Mauritius by at least two fold, but we would, at the same time, have missed out on the opportunity to make major savings in terms of substantially lower capital investment resulting from the SPV business model of EASSy.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Protocol provides for Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to be on the legal entities to own, operate and maintain the cable. The capital requirement of the SPVs is estimated at USD 280 m excluding the extension costs to Mauritius, which could range from USD 24 m and USD 70 m depending on the exact routing configuration of the cable. Therefore, with the inclusion of Mauritius into EASSy the total investment is estimated to be between USD 304 m and USD 350 m. This amount will be raised through a mix of equity, debt and quasi equity. The maximum equity contribution from eligible entities will be USD 2 m. The quantum of funding to be raised through debt and quasi equity will depend on the total amount obtained through equity contributions.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Protocol provides for Mauritius as a party member State, to invest in the project with the following as shareholders –

- (i) operators licensed to provide international communication services and other providers of international communication services recognized by the Mauritian Government which shall be the predominant category;
- (ii) national non-operator entities that the Mauritian Government may nominate, and
- (iii) the Government of Mauritius.

I would like to point out that the extension costs of connecting Mauritius will not have to be borne solely by Mauritius. These costs will, in fact, be shared equally among all the SPVs shareholders. As such the Mauritian operators licensed to provide international communication services as well as the Mauritian non-operator entities nominated by Government will only need to invest the same equity contribution, that is, a maximum of USD 2 m each on an equal footing with any other SPV shareholder.

It is also to be noted that one equity share of a maximum of USD 2 m may be contributed either by only one entity or by a number of entities who have grouped together.

ENTERPRISES – NHPA/SMIDO/SEHDA - REGISTRATION

(No. B/1545) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether, in regard to small and medium enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof which are registered with the National Handicraft Promotion Authority and the Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation as at 30 June 2005 and with the SEHDA as at to date, indicating the number thereof which are still in operation.

Reply: I am informed that for the period July 2000 to June 2005, 428 enterprises were registered with ex-SMIDO. For period 1989 to June 2005, 2,252 enterprises were registered with ex-SIDO (Small Industry Development Organisation) and ex-SMIDO (Small Medium Industry Development Organisation).

For period January 2005 to June 2005, 40 enterprises were registered, I might add that prior to July 2005, it took three to four months for SME certificates to be issued. It takes only two days for same to be delivered.

As regards handicraft, from July 2000 to June 2005, 201 enterprises were registered with ex-NHPA (National Handicraft Promotion Authority). Between 1985 and June 2005, 1,492 artisans were registered.

From 01 July 2005 to 24 November 2006, 3,705 enterprises were registered with SEHDA.

IRON BARS – PRICE INCREASE

(No. B/1546) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Co-operatives whether, in regard to iron bars, he will state the measures Government proposes to take, if any, following the recent price increase thereof to –

- (a) prevent Murray & Roberts from benefiting from any windfall gains, and
- (b) ensure that the old stock thereof is sold at the price prevailing before the increase.

Reply: The price of locally manufactured iron bars is fixed under the “Maximum Price” regime in accordance with the Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Price) Regulation 1998. However, anyone, including local manufacturers of iron bars can import rebars and sell same on the local market at the fixed price.

As the House is aware, the price of iron bars was increased by 20% with effect from 18 November 2006. Following the increase, Sections Rolling Ltd./MISCO (Mtius) Ltd. has adjusted the sale price of iron bars from their existing stock of 2947 m/tons. The new price is 3% below the

fixed rate of 20%, that is, at 17%. Sections Rolling Ltd/MISCO (Mauritius) Ltd. has advertised the new prices in the press on 23 November 2006.

In accordance with section 8(1) of the Consumer Protection (Prices and Supplies Control) Act, Sections Rolling Ltd./MISCO Mauritius Ltd, is bound to sell its iron bars at the prices indicated in the advertisement published in the press, otherwise it shall commit an offence. The Consumer Protection Unit has been requested to monitor the situation.

VALE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/1547) Mr R. Guttee (Third Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a new wing and the upliftment works to the playground at the Vale Government School, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The project comprises a toilet block, covered link and the upgrading of the football ground. This contract was awarded to the DWC in August 2005 and works are ongoing. Following the decision to close the DWC, a new tender exercise has been initiated for the completion of the remaining works, that is, internal and external rendering, plumbing and electrical installation, finishing works, such as tiling, painting and the upgrading of the football pitch.

The tender documents for this new contract were sent to the Central Tender Board on 24 November 2006 and the tentative implementation programme for the completion of the remaining works is as follows –

- Approval of CTB – mid December 2006
- Tender procedures and award – end February 2007
- Construction to start by mid-March 2007 and to be completed by mid-June 2007

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - EMPLOYEES - OVERTIME

(No. B/1548) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware that the ambulance drivers and attendants, the hospital servants and the gatekeeper working at the Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, have, as at to date, not been paid for overtime work performed during the past six months and, if so, will he state the reasons therefor.

Reply: I have been informed that there has been a delay in the payment of overtime to some employees of my Ministry belonging to the grades of ambulance driver, ambulance attendant, hospital servant and gatekeeper posted at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo hospital.

I view this situation with serious concern and I have already ordered that an inquiry be carried out so as to know the reasons thereof. Furthermore, instructions have been given for all outstanding payments to be settled forthwith.

I am advised that payment has been effected accordingly.

CITÉ LA CURE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/1549) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Health Centre at Cité La Cure, he will state if his Ministry is proposing to carry out any development works thereat and, if so, when the works are scheduled to start.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/690 in May 2006, wherein I informed the House that action was being taken to extend the Cité La Cure Community Health Centre.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping which is responsible for implementation of infrastructural projects has informed that tenders are being prepared and same will be launched early next year. Construction works are expected to start in May 2007 and completed within six months.

PAUL TOUREAU STREET, PORT LOUIS - SEWERAGE/DRAINAGE WORKS

(No. B/1550) Mrs B. Juggoo (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Paul Toureau street, Port Louis, he will state if his Ministry is proposing to carry out sewerage/drainage works thereat and, if so, when works are scheduled to start.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Government is presently undertaking major improvement works to the sewerage infrastructure in ten CHA and Low Cost Housing Estates under the Phase III rehabilitation programme.

Paul Toureau street forms part of a region which has been earmarked for provision of sewerage infrastructure under the ongoing present Phase III programme.

I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that tenders for the construction works in the Paul Toureau region are presently at evaluation stage and, subject to all necessary clearances being obtained, construction works will start by January/February 2007 and will last for approximately 9 to 10 months.

SIDS CONFERENCE – VEHICLES PURCHASED

(No. B/1551) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the vehicles purchased for the last SIDS conference which was held in Mauritius, he will give -

- (a) a breakdown in terms of engine capacity thereof, and

- (b) the number thereof which reached Mauritius after the beginning of the conference

(Withdrawn)

SIDS CONFERENCE – TENDER EXERCISE

(No. B/1552) Mr V. Mardemootoo (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the vehicles purchased for the last SIDS conference which was held in Mauritius, he will state whether a number thereof has been sold to the public or private companies and, if so, indicating –

- (a) the number of used and unused vehicles which were sold;
- (b) whether duties and other dues were paid by the new buyers;
- (c) the names of the new buyers, and
- (d) whether any tender exercise was resorted to and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

LOWER DAGOTIERE/L'ASSURANCE DAGOTIERE – NEW BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/9) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if he will consider the advisability of constructing a new bridge leading from lower Dagotièrè near the Viswanath Mandir to L'Assurance Dagotièrè, in view of the narrowness of the present one.

Reply: I have been advised by the Moka-Flacq District Council that the bridge leading from Lower Dagotièrè near the Viswanath Mandir to L'Assurance Dagotièrè is indeed narrow and that only a few public vehicles ply over the link road which leads to the newly-built NHDC complex. I am given to understand that most of vehicles use the main road, across which a new bridge has recently been built by the Road Development Authority and financed by the National Development Unit.

According to the District Council the bridge is structurally safe. The handrails on both sides which have been partly damaged will be reinstated by the District Council within a month.

The construction of a new bridge providing for two lanes will cost approximately Rs25 m. and depending on availability of funds, the Moka/Flacq District Council will be called upon to give consideration to the scheme to put up a new bridge.

CAMP THOREL – PARCOURS DE SANTE

(No. A/10) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the *parcours de santé* at Camp Thorel, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: There have been delays from the part of the DWC to complete the project in time. The project is now expected to be completed by the end of December 2006.