



**EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2026**

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## THE CABINET

(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands,
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
Hon. Govindranath Gunness	Minister of National Infrastructure
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohol	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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**MAURITIUS**

**Eighth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 20 of 2026**

**Sitting of Tuesday 30 June 2026**

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

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### IPU 137<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY – INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PARLIAMENTARISM

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, today, on the occasion of the 137<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), we commemorate the International Day of Parliamentarism.

We join Parliaments around the world who are members of the IPU, and like us, are observing this important occasion under the theme: “What Parliaments are doing to bring human rights into focus?”.

This theme is a timely reminder that the promotion and protection of human rights lie at the very heart of Parliamentary democracy. Parliament is not merely a law-making institution. It is the guardian of the rights and freedoms of the people whom we serve.

Last year, I told you that it is within these walls that the fundamental rights and freedoms, as enshrined in our Constitution, can become living realities.

Our role is multifaceted and is often much more than meets the eyes. Through legislation, oversight and representation, we have a duty to ensure that the principles of equality, justice, dignity, and non-discrimination are reflected in our laws, policies and public institutions.

Our responsibility is not only to uphold fundamental rights, but also to ensure that they are meaningful and accessible to all members of our society. At the same time, we must also ensure that every citizen is responsible because everyone has a duty of respect for the rights of others and those of our community as a whole.

As representatives of the people, we must strive to enforce a Parliamentary culture based on respect, inclusion, accountability, and constructive dialogue. In so doing, we shall strengthen public confidence in our democratic institutions and contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

On this International Day of Parliamentarism, let us reaffirm our commitment to placing human rights at the centre of our work. Let us ensure that the National Assembly remains a forum where the rights, aspirations and concerns of all Mauritians are given due consideration.

Hon. Members, you may speak here without fear or favour on ideas in which you believe, but I expect you to do so always with the highest standard of respect for those who do not share those ideas.

Hon. Members, I do not normally abuse of quotations, but today, I want to end by a quote attributed to famous writer and defender of free speech and civil liberties, Voltaire. In English –

“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

*En français –*

*« Je ne suis pas d'accord avec ce que vous dites, mais je me battrai jusqu'à la mort pour que vous ayez le droit de le dire. »*

This to me expresses clearly what should be our spirit in a democratic Parliament.

Thank you.

**PAPERS LAID**

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

**A. Prime Minister's Office**

**Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications**

**Ministry of Finance**

**Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands**

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. X of 2026). (In Original)
- (b) The Annual Report of the Accountant-General and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Budgetary Central Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

**B. Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2024.

**C. Ministry of Local Government**

- (a) The Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements, as amended, and the Annual Report of the District Council of Savanne for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****PENSION REFORMS – NPPF INTRODUCTION & PRGF ABOLITION –  
CONSULTATIONS & COMMITTEES**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the pension reforms, including the introduction of the National Pension and Provident Fund and the abolition of the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund (PRGF), he will state whether –

- (a) his Ministry held consultations with the –
  - (i) Ministry of Finance in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the dates of the meetings, the persons in attendance and outcome thereof;
  - (ii) Commission of Experts in relation thereto prior to the introduction thereof and to the Cabinet meeting of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026, and
- (b) an Inter-Ministerial Committee or a Steering Committee has been set up to look into the abolition of the PRGF and, if so, indicate the names of the members thereof.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Minister!

**Mr Subron:** Thank you, hon. Leader of the Opposition. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is recalled that at paragraph 240 of the Budget Speech 2025-2026, the hon. Prime Minister has announced that in order to address this burning issue, that is, the pension issue, we are setting up a Commission of Experts to make recommendations to reform the various pillars of our pension system, including revamping the National Pension Funds to replace the CSG.

The hon. Prime Minister said –

“I will personally chair a Steering Committee to assess and act on the recommendations of the Commission.”

As Minister, I was handed over in July 2025, by the then Deputy Prime Minister, a copy of the draft Terms of Reference for the setting up of a Committee of Experts to look into the pension reforms.

In September 2025, I officially submitted my views in writing on the matter as Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to the hon. Prime Minister and copied to the then Deputy Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, in Cabinet Highlights of 26 September 2025, Cabinet agreed to the setting up of a Committee of Experts to make recommendations to reform the various pillars of the pension system, including the revamping of the National Pensions Fund to replace the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée*. The Committee of Experts was to be constituted as follows

–

- (a) Mr Nureshkumar Prayag, Actuary as Chairperson;
- (b) Mr Bernard Yen, Actuary;
- (c) Mr Azad Jeetun, Economist;
- (d) Mrs Verena Tandrayen-Ragoobur, Economist;
- (e) Mr Sattar Jackaria, Actuary;
- (f) Mr Yvan Legris, Actuary, and
- (g) Ms Li Fa (Aimé) Cheung Kai Suet, Statistician.

I am quoting the Cabinet decision –

“According to its Terms of Reference which have been worked out in consultation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the Commission of Experts will review the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund, the National Savings Fund, the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds, the Civil Service Defined Benefits and Defined Contribution Pension Schemes, the Family Protection Schemes as well as pension schemes for public officials. The Commission will look into the revamping of the NPF to replace the CSG. In addition, the Commission will assist in defining a long-term strategy for the financial sustainability of the pension system and will provide –

- (a) an Actuarial and Fiscal Sustainability Report, showing the long-term projections of pension liabilities and expenditures over a 20-30-year horizon; and
- (b) a Cost-Benefit Analysis by comparing the existing contributory pension system with potential alternative models.

Cabinet has further agreed to the setting up of a Steering Committee on Pension Reform, which will provide guidance to the Commission on the strategic direction and policy priorities for the reform on the pension system; and assess and act on the recommendation of the Commission under the chair of the Prime Minister and the following members –

- (a) the Deputy Prime Minister;
- (b) the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries;
- (c) the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity;
- (d) the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning;
- (e) the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations;
- (f) the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, and
- (g) the Junior Minister of Finance; and
- (h) the Junior Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity.”

The Secretariat of the Pensions Reform Committee comprised officers of the Ministry of Finance and my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that on 07 November 2025, a press communique from the Committee of Experts was issued inviting proposals from the public on pensions reforms.

Consultations were held with several stakeholders, mainly the Financial Service Commission, the SICOM, Family Protection Scheme and Trade Unions, amongst others.

Madam Speaker, on 20 May 2026, a working session was held whereby a PowerPoint presentation was made by the experts to the Inter-Ministerial Committee. I as well as other hon. Ministers and hon. Junior Ministers, members of the Steering Committee who were present, raised a series of issues.

I requested for a meeting with the hon. Prime Minister since 27 May 2026 on pension issues related to the PowerPoint presentation made and the forthcoming budget. On 16 June 2026, I met the hon. Prime Minister in the presence of his financial advisers and experts, and as a caring Minister, I raised several concerns.

On the Budget Day, 19 June 2026, a series of measures were announced and detailed in the Budget itself and Annex to the Budget.

Madam Speaker, after taking cognizance of the details announced, and the feedback received from my colleagues of my party, we realised that the Means Testing must be frozen and some of the measures proposed must be further discussed.

On Sunday 21 June 2026, I received a communication from the hon. Prime Minister for an urgent meeting to discuss issues concerning pension in the Budget. After this meeting, the Prime Minister made a Statement on Monday 22 June 2026 in the National Assembly that the

Means Testing was frozen and in reply to the Private Notice Question for the Sitting of 25 June 2026, the hon. Prime Minister further added that the Means Testing was out and very importantly, he tabled a printed version of the PowerPoint Presentation which contained the other pillars of the pension reform, including the revamping of the NPF.

Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, while the NPF falls under the aegis of my Ministry, the PRGF falls under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations. And my Ministry is the administrator and paying agent for same.

As a matter of fact, let me inform the House of the fund evolution of the NPF, PRGF and NSF. In June 2020, the NPF fund amounted to Rs129 billion – I will round the figures. In 2021, Rs149 billion. In 2022, Rs142 billion. In June 2023, Rs145 billion. In June 2024, Rs154 billion. In June 2025, that is, as at now, Rs159 billion. I have rounded the figures.

The PRGF, in June 2020, amounted, I am rounding the figures again, to some Rs20 billion. In June 2021, it amounted to Rs44 billion. Madam Speaker, I will give the figures for 2022 because all the operations of the PRGF, in fact, started really functioning because of COVID-19 as from June 2022. As from June 2022, the fund of the PRGF amounted to Rs1.1 billion. 2023, Rs2.8 billion. June 2024, Rs5.5 billion and June 2025, Rs8.7 billion. These are facts!

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) of the question, that is, whether my Ministry held consultation with the Ministry of Finance in relation thereto, and if so, indicate the dates of the meeting, the person in that attendance and outcome, the answer is, except for the meeting referred in my answer above, I had no meeting. The persons in attendance, as I mentioned, were the experts, the financial advisers of the Prime Minister and the Financial Secretary.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a)(ii) of the question, that is, whether my Ministry held consultations with the Commission of Experts in relation thereto prior to the introduction thereof and the Cabinet Decision of Friday 19 June 2026, again, as mentioned above, a PowerPoint presentation was made on 20 May 2026 by the Committee of Experts to members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee. I was present there, together with the hon. Junior Minister who is member of the Steering Committee. We attended this meeting.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, that is, whether an Inter-Ministerial Committee or Steering Committee has been set up to look into the abolition of the PRGF and, if so, indicate the names of the members thereof, I already mentioned the names of the members of the Steering Committee when I explained the chronology and the history

of the event. My answer would be since the Inter-Ministerial Committee is chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, it is up to the hon. Prime Minister to decide on the matter. This would be my reply to the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. First supplementary, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Merci, Madame la présidente. J'espère que je me trompe. J'ai comme l'impression que l'honorable ministre a un double langage : un langage pour les honorables membres de cette auguste Assemblée et un autre langage pour la population.

**Madam Speaker:** Do not impute motives!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can I directly ask that question to the hon. Minister?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Will he confirm to the House whether he is satisfied with the report of the experts?

**Madam Speaker:** You cannot ask for his opinion. You cannot ask for his opinion. Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** ... because the nation wants to know whether he is with them or against them, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** But you still have to respect the Standing Orders.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, with regard to the abolition of the PRGF, is the hon. Minister saying to this House and the population at large, that he is fully agreeable with that decision?

**Madam Speaker:** Again!

**Mr Subron:** This is a question of opinion and the Standing Order does not allow it. I will say that the matter is still under discussion.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay. Next question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** What is under discussion?

**Madam Speaker:** The matter, he said.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Let me refresh the memory of the same hon. Minister, Madam Speaker. He stated in a press conference last year that he is in favour of maintaining that PRGF.

**Madam Speaker:** Again! I am sorry. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, again, you are not supposed to refer to newspapers. I can cite you...

**Mr Lesjongard:** I am referring to what he said in the press.

**Madam Speaker:** But you are referring to a newspaper nonetheless. You are a seasoned politician. You know what is allowed and what is not allowed. So, please.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, last year in a public announcement, the hon. Minister stated that he is in favour of maintaining the PRGF. Does it mean that now, he is for the abolition of PRGF as mentioned in the Annex of the Budget Speech?

**Mr Subron:** Madam Speaker, as I said, the matter is under consideration. We must thank the hon. Prime Minister who has done two things. First, freezing and getting out the Means Test from the pension reform. We must commend him.

**Mr Lesjongard:** This was already...

**Mr Subron:** Let me finish. *Si mo bizin dimann twa permission, be mo pa pou koz ditou.*

Second, that the hon. Prime Minister and the Government tabled the report of the Commission of Experts. This is what is enabling democratic debates all around the country on the issue of the second and other pillars of the pension reform, okay?

I must say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition – I was one of the main persons and trade unionists who fought for the PRGF. Had it not been me, not been the General Workers Federation, the Joint Negotiating Panel of the Sugar Industry and other trade unions, the PRGF that is here now, would not have been the same.

At the time, I called the PRGF as a *seo perse* because what was presented by the then Government, was a PRGF that would have been meaningless. The first version that was presented was a PRGF which did not cater for the 15 days as a matter of right to private sector worker of gratuity. It did not cater. It was us who added the 4.5% and coupled it with the past services.

Had it not been me and the trade unions, the General Workers Federation, the JNP and other trade unions, the provision in the law of guaranteeing 15 days per years of service to workers, would not have existed.

Third, had it not been me and the trade unions, the PRGF would have been a *seo perse* because the provision was made that employers were unable to pay for the PRGF had they paid for the private pension scheme.

And it is us who made the amendment – to amend the law so that if an employer contributes to a pension fund, the contribution cannot be less than what it would have been.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker ...

**Madam Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Subron:** No, you are on the PRGF. I am refreshing your memory, okay? I am refreshing your memory, you know?

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, I am refreshing your memory on facts and on what happened. Okay? You did not stand there. I stood.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister! Minister, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** He forgot...

**Madam Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, the stark reality is that he is abolishing the PRGF today. The Minister, Madam Speaker, should stop sitting on the fence. Otherwise, he will get stuck on the fence, Madam Speaker!

**Madam Speaker:** You are not asking a question. You are making a statement!

**Mr Lesjongard:** More than 10 days after the budget, Madam Speaker, I believe that the hon. Minister has taken full cognizance of the details of the pension reforms.

Now, concerning the SAP, will the hon. Minister inform the House on what basis has the sum of Rs11,589 – I have to correct myself because last time, I stated 598; it is Rs11,589 – has been calculated?

**Mr Subron:** I already replied to this question. We are awaiting the details from the Ministry of Finance. This is what I replied in the Committee of Supply – you were not here. And the details will be finalised. The issue is whether the people, workers and citizens will

have their pension at the age of 60, a reduced pension. This is the matter of discussion. It is being discussed. That is one.

The second is that we are focusing on the NPF and the PRGF. So, I already replied. I wait for the next question.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Now, will the hon. Minister confirm to the House that once someone opts for that amount, will he be paid that amount for his lifetime?

**Mr Subron:** The matter is under consideration. You will get the details when the Government finalises it. It will be part of the Finance Bill. So!

**Mr Mohamed:** Stop jumping the gun!

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, next question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, we have an Annex to the Budget with us and he is replying today that this is under consideration?

**Madam Speaker:** But it seems...

**Mr Lesjongard:** Now, will the hon. Minister confirm to the House that with the new system encouraging an elderly person to opt for his/her old age pension at 70 years with the promise of earning more while earning much less if they opt for the pension at 60 years is an insult to our elderly?

**Madam Speaker:** Again, you are asking him for his opinion. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I understand this is a very important matter, everybody, but this matter has already been thrashed out here. The whole issue was thrashed out. And his answer is that it is still being considered.

**Mr Lesjongard:** But he is saying it is still under consideration!

**Madam Speaker:** But that is what was said!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Subron:** Madam Speaker, this is a democratic Government. This issue after the Means Test is out – because this issue is also linked to the Means Testing – so, the matter...

**Mr Lesjongard:** This is confusing!

**Mr Subron:** No, I am not confusing. You are confusing the people of this country.

**An hon. Member:** Exactly!

**Mr Subron:** I am saying that the matter is under discussion. We are following the democratic process. Maybe you do not know what that means. I know what the democratic process means.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister!

**Mr Subron:** Let me refresh your mind.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister!

**Mr Subron:** Let me refresh your mind.

**Madam Speaker:** Minister!

**Mr Subron:** In 2020, you presented a budget...

**Madam Speaker:** No, no, Minister! I am not...

**Mr Subron:** You presented a budget and you did not...

**Madam Speaker:** Minister, please sit down! We will not have this. We want questions and answers. We do not want either side to start. We do not want that!

**Mr A. Duval:** *Nou pa le palab.*

**An hon. Member:** It is relevant.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Your friend is asking. Are you going to give way?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, I will give later, Madam Speaker.

Has the hon. Minister been apprised of information related to members of the Commission of Experts on potential conflict of interest? And if yes, has he discussed the matter with the hon. Prime Minister?

**Mr Subron:** Let me say, whatever I had to say on the Committee of Experts, its term of reference, its composition, I wrote to the ex-Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister. What I wrote in this letter, my views, are privy to the ex-Deputy Prime Minister and privy to the Prime Minister.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Next question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** I have put a question in Parliament. He has to answer as the Minister to this country, Madam Speaker.

Can the hon. Minister inform the House which retired pension mechanisms will be in place as from next month?

**Mr Subron:** I already replied to this question, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Hon. Minister, I say it again. Are you aware of the confusion out there because our elderly have not understood the pension reforms that Government will be implementing? Will you confirm, hon. Minister, that there is a serious deficit of communication with regard to the pension reforms?

**Madam Speaker:** Okay, that is another question. Communication!

**Mr Subron:** Yes, the hon. Prime Minister communicated the stand of the Government in the statement he made in Parliament on the freezing of the Means Testing.

**Mr Lesjongard:** The people of this country...

**Mr Subron:** I am answering this House. You are asking questions; I am here to reply to you and to the House and to the people. And the hon. Prime Minister said, subsequently to your PNQ, that the Means Testing is out. This is one. The second very important issue is that the report, the PowerPoint presentation, which is the interim report has been tabled in the National Assembly. Thirdly, we are finalising everything as a democratic Government, as a Government that listens to the people that you were not listening to.

Madam Speaker, I must say, I am afraid. I stood in front of the Treasury building in 2020.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please!

**Mr Subron:** ...and they suppressed the dissent.

**An hon. Member:** *Zordi...*

**Mr Subron:** They suppressed the Opposition.

*(Interruptions)*

*Sa mo zafer! Mwa mo deside ki mo pou fer, pa twa!*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, what is this?

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

**Mr Lesjongard:** A very direct question, again, hon. Minister. Is it correct to say that as from January 2027, for a person aged 62 years, his pension will decrease by Rs3,000?

**Mr Subron:** As I stated, the matter is being finalised as a democratic Government and any specification on this issue will be within the Finance Bill that will be presented to the National Assembly. The hon. Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity, as will all the Members of the Assembly, to present his views or challenge or opposition to what will be presented in the Finance Bill.

**Madam Speaker:** That is better.

**Mr Lesjongard:** I have got two questions. Then, I am done.

Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware of the massive outcry from all the trade unions of this country on this pension reform?

**Mr Subron:** Yes, I am. Many of them are my comrades. But let me say it loud and clear. The real *arnaque du siècle* happened on 04 June 2020, during the presentation of the 2021 Budget.

*(Interruptions)*

But let me speak!

...whereby the Government led by Pravind Jugnauth with Renganaden Padayachy as the Minister of Finance and supported by the hon. Leader of the Opposition decided overnight to put an abrupt end to the Mauritian ...

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I have a question.

**Mr Subron:** ... contributory retirement pension system, that is, the NPF.

**Mr A. Duval:** He is wasting time.

**Mr Subron:** This sadly certainly came in effect on 01 September 2020.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Ça suffit!

**Mr Subron:** For the record, let me add that the then Minister of Finance has...

*(Interruptions)*

Let me reply!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** He is wasting time.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr J. Bérenger:** *Kifer pa dir tou.*

**Madam Speaker:** Do you, again, want to come and sit here?

You should let me even if I do not do it as well as you would!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr P. Bérenger:** *Ki komanter laba. Li mank vin Speaker!*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you opened the door. That does not mean to say, hon. Minister, that you just walk into this. We do not need that. We are on PNQ! There are specific questions. You put specific questions, but you start talking of democracy and all that. Put questions on facts!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, as you said, I have opened the door. It is for you to close the door as Speaker of this National Assembly!

*(Interruptions)*

Madame la présidente, est-ce que l'honorable ministre va participer au rassemblement des syndicats le 11 juillet ?

**Madam Speaker:** Ahh! That is most unfair!

**Mr Subron:** I participated in the 11 July demonstration against your Government and the dismantling of the NPF and the institution of the MIC. The famous MIC! Let me say, when my officers in the Ministry – I have learnt it afterwards – refused what Renganaden Padayachy wanted, that is, to use the money of the National Pension Fund to honour the

promises of increase in old age pension, BRP. Then, my officers refused and the Minister unilaterally, without consulting anyone, without seeking the opinion of any expert, decided to destroy the National Pension Fund. This was the *arnaque du siècle*! This is what brought us in this mess.

Instead of raising the ceiling of the NPS, instead of applying the National Pension Scheme on the remuneration of the workers so that we can get enough fund to pay the contribution, you destroyed it. What we are doing now is revamping it.

Everybody can have their opinion, okay? Thanks to what many of us have been doing, that is, prompting the report to be made public. You did not make anything public; you just destroyed it. You just destroyed it!

*(Interruptions)*

The NPF was just destroyed.

You were in the Opposition that time. Okay?

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister, that is enough!

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Speaker, may I?

**Mr Subron:** Okay. So, the *arnaque du siècle* was from your government.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Speaker, he is wasting time.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, he is taking the time of the House...

**Mr Subron:** The new system...

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

**Mr Subron:** The new system can be the subject of debate...

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

**Mr Subron:** You chose to put the question, not me.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** *To 'nn rode, to 'nn gagne!*

**Madam Speaker:** Normally, I have two minutes left but I will give two more minutes. Yes, hon. A. Duval!

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister. Il a tenu des propos... La question va venir. Il a tenu des propos extrêmement graves le 22 juin 2026 en disant que lui et le Premier ministre ont tous les deux été induits en erreur, notamment par le président de la commission sur le fait...

**Madam Speaker:** What is your question?

**Mr A. Duval:** Je vais venir à la question.

...que la pension serait coupée. Il l'a dit. Maintenant qu'il a tenu ces propos, quelle action a-t-il envisagé et recommandé au Premier ministre et au gouvernement pour que des actions sévères soient prises contre cette commission, son président et les propos dont il a été induit en erreur sur un sujet aussi important ?

**Mr Subron:** Let me say, whatever has been said in the media and the public on – yes, let me finish – on 22 June, the hon. Prime Minister after consulting some of his hon. Ministers, consulting the partners in the alliance, that is, the MMM, the Rezistans ek Alternatif and other MPs, decided to freeze. This is what happened. What is important is what has happened.

*(Interruptions)*

You are asking the question. Let me...

*Si to anvi koze, be mo ale.*

**Mr A. Duval:** You put the Statement after the...

**Mr Subron:** No, the statement, the hon. Prime Minister decided, and then the hon. Prime Minister said that the Means Testing is out and very importantly, I am saying it again, that the report was tabled.

This is now sparking, positively, a debate in the country and whatever will be decided, will be decided democratically within the framework of the Constitution, within the framework of National Assembly, law enactment and debates. This would be my answer, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes. Yes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, Madam Speaker, thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Bear with me, you have...

**Mr Lesjongard:** I have a very short question. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est conscient qu'il est devenu le mal aimé de tous les travailleurs de ce pays et un paria la politique, Madame la présidente ?

**Madam Speaker:** Non !

**Mr Subron:** One thing. One thing.

**Madam Speaker:** Ça c'est vraiment inacceptable !

**Mr Subron:** I do not have blood on my hands. Let it be remembered. I do not have the blood and planting on my hands. I do not have on my hands the issue of suppressing dissent. I was a victim; many people were the victims of suppressing dissent. One thing that is different – this Government is not suppressing dissent. You suppress dissent and went so far as opposition people was thrown in the sugarcane field burning.

**Madam Speaker:** Time is up! Hon. Members, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair for the moment. I will be back.

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please be seated! Question! Hon. Etwareea!

#### **FOREIGN NATIONALS – VISAS ISSUANCE – SPECIFIC SCRUTINY**

**(No. B/911) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the issue of visas to foreign nationals, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as the nationalities, if any, which are subject to specific scrutiny, indicating, in each case, the grounds therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Section 20 of the Immigration Act, provides that an Immigration Officer may admit to Mauritius a tourist, a businessman or any other visitor, and such persons shall be issued with a visa specifying the conditions thereof and the authorised period of stay in Mauritius.

Regulation 25 of the Passport Regulations 1968 requires every non-citizen entering Mauritius to meet the following immigration requirements –

- (a) a passport which is valid beyond the intended period of stay;

- (b) a valid return passage ticket to travel back to his or her country of origin or residence;
- (c) should be eligible to re-enter his or her country of origin or residence;
- (d) adequate funds to meet the cost of his stay;
- (e) have confirmed hotel booking or sponsorship for accommodation;
- (f) not engage in any gainful activity, and
- (g) not be a prohibited immigrant.

Any non-citizen who fails to meet any of the immigration requirement is not admitted to Mauritius, irrespective of his nationality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has a very liberal visa regime up to now. In 2026, Mauritius has been ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 199 countries by the Henley Openness Index, which is a global ranking that measures the number of nationalities that a country allows entry without a prior visa.

This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is no longer acceptable because the risks are much higher today. The latest example is what happened in Monaco just yesterday. This is why we are readdressing this issue.

While most of the foreigners obtain visas on arrival, nationals of some countries are required to apply and obtain a visa before entering Mauritius.

Section 12 of the Passports Act provides for the Minister to prescribe countries, the nationals of which should obtain a visa before entering Mauritius. Presently, there are 15 countries which fall under this category and these countries are listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Passport Regulations.

The countries in the Eleventh Schedule of the Passport Regulations are prescribed after due consideration of several factors, including but not limited, to the following –

- (a) security concerns,
- (b) international relations;
- (c) immigration policy, and
- (d) risk of abuse of visa.

According to the guidelines issued by the Passport and Immigration Office, nationals from these countries have to apply for visa at least one month before the intended date of travel. Subject to all documents being in order, the PIO takes around 12 working days to determine the applications for the visa.

I must point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that nationals from the listed countries are free to come to Mauritius and is visa free for them too. Over and above the immigration requirements, the Passport and Immigration Office carries out additional security checks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I announced in the Budget Speech 2026-2027 a new digital system will be introduced to enable all non-citizens from all countries, without distinction, to apply and obtain an e-visa. The e-visa will reduce the risk of *mala fide* persons entering Mauritius and will also reduce queues at arrival at the airport.

My Office is already working on that project.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay. PQ B/912 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture. So, hon. Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or!

#### **AIR MAURITIUS LTD – AIRCRAFTS SOLD, PURCHASED & HIRED**

**(No. B/913) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of aircrafts, over the period 2014 to 2024 –

- (a) sold, indicating in each case, the proceeds thereof and time of service at time of sale, and
- (b) purchased and hired respectively, indicating in each case, the –
  - (i) cost thereof;
  - (ii) time in service at time of purchase/hire, and
  - (iii) number of times same was grounded, indicating the reasons and duration thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply to Parliament Question B/364 at the Sitting of 15 April 2025, wherein the House was informed that during the period December 2014 to December 2024, Air Mauritius Ltd had disposed of four aircrafts, namely one A340-300 in January 2018, two A319-100 in June 2021, and one A330-200 aircraft in November of 2021. The House was also informed that, in

June 2021, Air Mauritius entered into a consignment agreement with a private company for the disassembling of the two A340-300 aircrafts. The net loss incurred for the sale of these aircrafts was approximately Rs1.2 billion.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by Air Mauritius that the four aircrafts which were sold between 2014 and 2024 had been in service for a period ranging from 12 to 23 years at the time of sale. I am also advised that information pertaining to the total proceeds received from these sales cannot be disclosed in view of the confidentiality clauses contained in the Sales Agreement.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that during the same period, Air Mauritius Ltd phased-in 11 aircrafts into its fleet. Out of these 11 aircrafts –

- (i) one was purchased directly;
- (ii) two through finance leases, and
- (iii) eight through operating leases.

As mentioned earlier, the total costs of purchase and lease rentals for these 11 aircrafts again cannot be disclosed due to the confidentiality clauses in the Lease/ Purchase Agreements.

Regarding part (b) (iii) of the question, I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd that during the period 2014 to 2024, 11 aircrafts were grounded for a total of 100 times. The reasons for the groundings were essentially due to various technical issues, unavailability of spare parts, spare engines, and supply chain constraints.

I wish to inform the House Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in reply to Parliamentary Question B/1191 on 09 December 2025, I informed the House that the Board of Air Mauritius Ltd had appointed KROLL Middle East Consultancy Ltd to conduct an independent forensic investigation with the following terms of reference –

1. the rationale for the sale and disposal of five aircrafts during the voluntary administration in 2020/2021. A sixth aircraft, namely an A340-300 was sold in 2018 but did not form part of the KROLL investigation as it did not relate to the COVID and the Air Mauritius Voluntary Administration Period;
2. the leasing of two A330-200 aircrafts in 2022, and
3. the order of one additional A350-900 aircraft in 2023.

I am informed that the Board of Air Mauritius Ltd met on 25 and 29 June 2026 to examine the Report which was submitted by KROLL. After considering the Report, the Board has treated the matters identified in the KROLL Report with the utmost seriousness and has resolved to take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect the interests of the Company, including –

- (i) referring relevant matters to the competent authorities, namely the Financial Crimes Commission and the Police;
- (ii) seeking any civil remedies available to the Company, and
- (iii) initiating appropriate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with legal requirements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that there have been concerted acts and conduct on the part of the former Chairperson of Airport Holdings Limited and a number of senior Air Mauritius officials to favour the leasing of aircraft by Air Mauritius from a very specific lesser. Such conduct could tantamount to a criminal conspiracy to prejudice the other bidders and Air Mauritius Ltd.

Furthermore, I understand that falsified and misleading Reports were submitted to the then Board in the full knowledge of two persons, namely, the former Chairperson of Airport Holdings Ltd, Mr Ken Arian, and the former Chief Executive Officer of Air Mauritius Ltd, Mr Kučko, with the objective of justifying the purchase of an additional A350-900 aircraft from Airbus contrary to the other internal reports to the effect that the A330 aircraft rather than an A350 aircraft was going to be in the best economic interest of Air Mauritius Ltd. They simply ignored that objection.

I also understand that the lease of an aircraft from that particular Lessor has been preceded by inspections of the aircraft overseas by Air Mauritius officials and other persons. The inspection reports omitted essential matters affecting the airworthiness of the leased aircraft. This led Air Mauritius to incur massive expenses to make the aircraft airworthy. Air Mauritius intends to institute disciplinary proceedings against the responsible officers.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that the former Administrators of Air Mauritius Ltd, namely Mr Sattar Abdoula, could be sued for damages, for negligence in connection with the disposal of an A332 aircraft during the period of administration of Air Mauritius Ltd as Government bail-out money was used to repay foreign creditors and SBM

Holdings in circumstances showing clear negligence by the Administrators in the exercise of their duties.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes. The hon. Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central.

**FIREARMS – LICENSES ISSUES/RENEWED/SUSPENDED/REVOKED –  
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**(No. B/914) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to firearms, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to, over the past five years, the –

- (a) number –
  - (i) of licences therefor issued, renewed, suspended and revoked per category of license;
  - (ii) thereof reported lost, stolen or unaccounted for, and
  - (iii) of incidents involving licensed firearms that have resulted in criminal investigations, injuries or fatalities, and
- (b) eligibility criteria for the issue of a license therefor and whether same are subjected to periodic reviews.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) (i), (ii) and (iii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, for the period 01 January 2021 to 25 June 2026, a total of 611 new firearm licences were issued, 4,264 licences were renewed, 8 licences were revoked, and no firearm licences were suspended.

During the same period, four firearms were reported lost, 14 were reported stolen, 10 were classified as unaccounted for. There were 32 recorded incidents involving licensed firearms, resulting in injuries and fatalities, and criminal investigations were initiated.

I am tabling the details requested by the hon. Member.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that, pursuant to sections 7 and 8 of the Firearms Act 2006, an applicant must satisfy the following eligibility criteria before a firearm license may be granted –

- (i) must hold a valid Competency Certificate which is issued by the Commissioner of Police upon successful completion of the prescribed training and passed the required tests;
- (ii) he/she must be of 18 years of age or more and must be a citizen of Mauritius;
- (iii) be a fit and proper person to possess or deal with firearms;
- (iv) be physically fit and have a stable mental condition;
- (v) not be dependent on intoxicating or narcotic substances;
- (vi) have not been convicted under the Firearms Act;
- (vii) have no convictions involving firearms, domestic violence or dangerous drugs, whether in Mauritius or abroad;
- (viii) not pose any risk to public safety or public order;
- (ix) have a good reason for possessing the firearm, and
- (x) have adequate and secure storage arrangements for the safe custody of firearms and ammunition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pursuant to section 12 of the Firearms Act 2006, a firearm license is renewable for yearly periods ending on 31 December, unless previously suspended or cancelled. Renewal is effected upon application made by the license holder and is subject to the production of the firearm and any ammunition in respect of which the license was issued, the firearm license book issued by the Commissioner of Police and a valid Competency Certificate must also be shown. Renewal is granted upon compliance with these statutory requirements.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has information from the Commissioner of Police regarding whether a national ballistic database exists to assist law enforcement agencies in linking firearms used in criminal offenses, and if not, whether consideration is to be given to establish one?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I missed the beginning of the of the question.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Whether a national ballistic database exists, and if it does not exist, which would assist those involved in enforcement agencies, that could be considered to be established in the future, if I may say, regarding recent case of firearm where a young gentleman was shot dead on a leased land recently?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they can do ballistics tests in Mauritius.

**Dr. Aumeer:** The last one. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether the Commissioner of Police has given him any information of measures that are in place to prevent licensed firearms, those that were given duly licensed by the authorities, from being diverted into the illegal market through theft, loss or unlawful receipt? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** The Police are well aware of this. I mentioned a few cases here, and they investigate those cases.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

#### **PENSION REFORM – COMMISSION OF EXPERTS – MEETINGS CONVENED**

**(No. B/915) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Commission of Experts on Pension Reform, he will state the number of times the Commission met since its setting up to date, including prior to the submission of its interim Report.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/915 and B/918 together, as they relate to the same subject matter.

With regard to Parliamentary Question B/915, as I have stated in my reply to the Private Notice Question on 25 June 2026, the Commission of Experts was set up in September 2025 to examine and make appropriate recommendations on the three pillars of the pension system, namely –

- (a) the Basic Non-Contributory Pensions, including Basic Retirement Pension, Basic Invalidity Pension and Basic Widows Pension;
- (b) the Contributory Pension Schemes, and

- (c) the Voluntary Private Pensions, including personal retirement savings plans and occupational pension schemes offered by employers.

I am informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the Commission that, since its establishment, it has convened a total of 27 meetings. Of these, 19 were held between November 2025 and March 2026 with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of –

- (a) trade unions;
- (b) Business Mauritius;
- (c) the Senior Citizens Council;
- (d) the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations;
- (e) the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms;
- (f) the Financial Services Commission, and
- (g) other organisations, including pension fund administrators and civil society groups.

I am further informed by the Commission that it held a press conference on 04 November 2025 to inform the public of its mandate, and at the press conference, the Commission also highlighted the challenges facing the country's pension system and underscored the need for reform to ensure the long-term sustainability of the system.

Furthermore, an email address was made available to invite members of the public to submit their views and proposals on pension reform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Commission has established three sub-committees to examine key aspects of the pension system. Specifically, the sub-committees were tasked with reviewing –

- (a) the non-contributory Basic Retirement Pension;
- (b) the reform of the National Pensions Fund, the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (CSG), the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund, and the National Savings Fund, and
- (c) the pension schemes applicable to the public sector.

The first sub-committee on the non-contributory BRP had convened 27 meetings. The second sub-committee tasked with reviewing the NPF, CSG, PRGF and NSF had 14 meetings, and the third sub-committee on public sector pension schemes had 10 meetings. In all, therefore, the sub-committees had 51 meetings in total.

I am further informed that all meetings of the Commission of Experts were held before the submission of its Interim Report, with the exception of two meetings, which were convened on 26 May 2026 and 18 June 2026. These were done to take on-board the comments and suggestions made to the Steering Committee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Parliamentary Question B/918, as the House is aware, the Steering Committee on Pension Reform was set up on 26 September 2025, a Ministerial Committee chaired by myself, including –

- (a) the then Deputy Prime Minister;
- (b) the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries;
- (c) the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity;
- (d) the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning;
- (e) the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations;
- (f) the Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives;
- (g) the Junior Minister of Finance, and
- (h) the Junior Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity.

At a meeting of the Steering Committee held on 20 May 2026, the Commission of Experts presented its findings and recommendations. Members of the Steering Committee made a number of comments and suggestions, which were then duly taken into consideration by the Commission in finalising its Interim Report. The Commission, thereafter, submitted its Interim Report, a copy of which I have laid on the Table of the National Assembly.

Furthermore, the Steering Committee was informed that the recommendations regarding the State Age Pension and the conversion of the National Pensions Fund into the National Pension and Provident Fund were validated by the Social Pension Specialists of the World Bank.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to the PNQ of last Thursday 25 June, I tabled the version of the Interim Report which was presented to the Steering Committee on May 2026,

that is, the version which was done by slides. This was presented. Today, I am further tabling the full version of the Interim Report which includes, *inter alia*, the projections of the cost of the Basic Retirement Pension under the arrangements applicable in June 2024 and June 2025, as well as those presented in the Budget Speech of 2026-2027.

The full version will also be made available on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

The Interim Report clearly shows, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the unfunded, non-contributory Basic Retirement Pension has already reached an unsustainable level, which is putting tremendous pressures on public finances as well as putting at risk the payment of pensions to future generations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many people may not realise it, but there is another elephant – I spoke of an elephant in the room, but there is another elephant – in the room that has gone unnoticed: the accumulated deficits in the defined benefit schemes of the statutory bodies and in the closed National Pension Fund. Based on the latest actuarial valuations, the funding deficit in the pension schemes of the statutory bodies was estimated at Rs53 billion, while that of the NPF stood at Rs113 billion, representing a combined deficit of Rs166 billion, that is, more than 20 percent of the current GDP. As the actuarial valuation for the NPF dates back to 2020, it is very likely that the financial position of the pension fund has deteriorated further, owing, among others, to the increasing life expectancy among scheme members and pensioners, and the contribution rates that have not kept pace with the schemes' long-term funding requirements.

The previous Government has done nothing, absolutely nothing, to address the structural challenges facing the pension system in a comprehensive and timely manner. On the contrary, it has aggravated the situation with its irresponsible decisions and the introduction of the CSG, and these have compounded the deficits and the unsustainability of the pension system.

In view of the fiscal challenges facing the country and the urgency of restoring the long-term sustainability of the pension system, Government considered it necessary to act without delay on the recommendations of the Commission of Experts. Accordingly, it was decided to implement the reforms relating to the Basic Retirement Pension and other important aspects of the pension system as part of the 2026-2027 Budget. This reform aimed at putting the pension system on a more sustainable footing while ensuring that future generations continue to benefit from a viable and equitable retirement income system.

Our primary concern, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has always been to put in place a system wherein equity is measured as redistribution within generation from high to low-income earners, and across generations in the form of sustainable tax burden.

**Mr A. Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened very carefully to the hon. Prime Minister. It is not clear whether the Steering Committee has, in fact, been apprised of the Report, whether it has been submitted, and whether it deliberated upon it. I will ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether in regard to what the hon. Minister of Social Security stated on 22 June publicly, that the Report was never submitted to the Steering Committee and not debated upon, whether this is rather the course of action that was taken by Government?

**The Prime Minister:** He never said that. He said that there was a meeting of the Steering Committee, and they showed us the findings on a slide system. That was what was shown to all of them. All the main points were there, and this was what I deposed. I am prepared to depose the whole – now that it is ready; if someone wants to take it – the whole of the Interim Report.

**Mr A. Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a last question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr A. Duval:** I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister, again, in regard to what the hon. Minister of Social Security stated in his public announcement that himself, that is, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Social Security, *ont été induits en erreur* to the fact ...

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

**Mr A. Duval:** ... that the pension would be cut from existing pensioners and I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister if that is exactly what has happened or not, to clear up that matter?

**The Prime Minister:** He answered that question just now. But you are not still not satisfied. What we did, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is people were complaining that their pension was going to be at 65, although it was done on a gradual basis, not sudden. There was no sudden change to the pension scheme. But because some people were complaining, like some people do some work that are difficult, like *les maçons*, etc., we decided that we can correct this and allow them the option to take their pension at the age of 60. That is what we did.

But the other bit that you are saying, we decided after consultation with the hon. Minister and other members, including members of the Labour Party, we decided now to put out the Means Testing because many people were not accepting it. So, we decided to put it out for the moment and we are relooking at the system.

**Mr A. Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, if I may?

**The Deputy Speaker:** No. Last question if you have a question.

**Mr A. Duval:** It is not what the hon. Minister of Social Security stated. He stated that on 16 June.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Put your question to the hon. Prime Minister!

**Mr A. Duval:** That is the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Do not refer to what the hon. Minister stated.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, whether the hon. Prime Minister will...

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister was not there when he stated.

**Mr A. Duval:** I am asking my question: whether the hon. Prime Minister will, in reply to what has been stated to the Ministry of Social Security, that he himself and the Ministry of Social Security were told, assurances were given that the pension would not be cut when it was in fact the contrary that has been announced to three days later, whether this is exactly what happened in his office on that day or not? That is the question.

**The Prime Minister:** The answer is no! Simple as that. No! We are not cutting any pension. We have changed the system because it became unsustainable because of the Government; you sat there with them and destroyed the pension scheme, as the hon. Minister just said. This is what the anarchy is.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. First Member for Vacoas & Floréal! This will be the last question.

**STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AGREEMENT – ACQUISITION & CROSS-SERVICING AGREEMENT – OBJECTIVES & SCOPE**

(No. B/916) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the signing of the State Partnership Program Agreement with the New Mexico National Guard and of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with the United States of America, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the respective objectives and scope thereof, indicating the military support, supplies and services that Mauritius undertakes to provide to, or receive from the armed forces of the United States of America thereunder.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a Small Island Developing State with an Exclusive Economic Zone of around 2.3 million square kilometres, Mauritius faces significant maritime security challenges that extend well beyond its capabilities due to its limited resources. These challenges include Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing, drug trafficking, transnational organised crime, irregular migration, piracy, climate change and the protection of critical maritime infrastructure to name but a few.

No single country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Western Indian Ocean can effectively address these challenges in isolation. Mauritius has consistently pursued a policy of strengthening bilateral, regional and international partnerships to enhance its maritime security, law enforcement and disaster capabilities.

In this regard, Mauritius enjoys longstanding cooperation with friendly countries and international organisations such as India, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the European Union, INTERPOL and the UNODC, through joint exercises, capacity building, information sharing, maritime domain awareness initiatives, technical assistance and training programmes. These partnerships are essential in enhancing the capabilities of Mauritius to ensure its maritime surveillance while reinforcing regional security and stability in the Indian Ocean.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the State Partnership Program with the New Mexico National Guard and the proposed Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with the Government of the United States of America are cooperation agreement aimed at safeguarding security in our EEZ.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the objective of the State Partnership Program Agreement, which was signed on 22 May 2026, is to establish an enduring institutional partnership through professional exchanges, technical cooperation and capacity building. The Agreement creates no legal or financial obligations on us, and is centred on knowledge sharing and professional cooperation. The scope of the State Partnership Program includes –

- (i) capacity building and professional training;
- (ii) humanitarian assistance, disaster preparedness and response;
- (iii) maritime and border security cooperation;
- (iv) cybersecurity and emerging security threats, and
- (v) operational planning and crisis management.

As regards the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, Cabinet has approved its signing in May 2026, and it is expected that the Agreement will be signed shortly.

The Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement is an instrument to facilitate the reciprocal provision of logistic support between the Government of Mauritius and that of the United States of America during authorised activities such as joint exercises, training, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations and other mutually agreed cooperative engagements.

Under the proposed Agreement, the support, supplies and services include the provision of food, water, fuel, temporary accommodation, transportation, medical services, training services, repair and maintenance services and port services, where permitted by the national laws of both Parties. Such support may only be provided upon mutual agreement and on a reimbursable or equal-value exchange basis. In other words, if you give them food, they have to pay for it, whatever.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that neither the State Partnership Program nor the proposed Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement constitutes a military alliance or a defence treaty. There is no provision in any of these two Agreements to authorise the establishment of foreign military bases, the permanent stationing of foreign military personnel, or the transfer of weapon. All cooperation remains subject to the laws of Mauritius and the sovereign decisions of the Government of Mauritius. These frameworks are intended solely to strengthen the operational capabilities, resilience and preparedness of

Mauritius in addressing contemporary security challenges through cooperation with trusted international partners.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Oui. Merci. L'honorable Premier ministre, peut-il la formulation, si le dossier des Chagos a été évoqué durant les négociations pour la signature de ces accords ?

**The Prime Minister:** This is a separate issue. It has not been involved in that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last one because time is already over.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Dans le même esprit démocratique et de transparence auquel faisait référence un peu plus tôt l'honorable Subron, l'honorable Premier ministre peut-il déposer sur la Table de l'Assemblée le texte intégral du *State Partnership Program Agreement* et de *l'Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement* pour que le public et les députés puissent en prendre connaissance ?

**The Prime Minister:** As I have said, there is no defence agreement or whatever. I will be prepared to do it, but I will have to check with the United States whether they agree.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, time is over. The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/919, B/921, and B/923. Now we go to question address to hon. Ministers!

The hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

#### **NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION – EXTENDED PROGRAMME – ENROLMENTS & FAILURES**

**(No. B/924) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the National Certificate of Education, he will state the number of students of the Extended Programme enrolled thereunder over the period 2021 to date, on a yearly basis, indicating the number thereof who failed same and the number thereof having subsequently opted for technical or vocational training.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to thank the hon. Member for this pertinent PQ. In fact, this PQ touches at one of the most despicable changes in the assessment and curriculum framework ever done in our system of education. Let me refer to the mid-term evaluation of the extended programme by the World Bank, which highlighted two fundamental questions, which was as follows –

- (i) What is the evidence that Extended Programme students are progressing as intended?
- (ii) To what extent is the teaching and learning programme, for example, choice of learning area, type and amount of content to be covered, suitable for EP students?

In their conclusion in June 2020, the experts who carried out the mid-term evaluation of the Extended Programme by the World Bank said the following, I quote –

“Most students within the EP were functioning academically at a primary school level, several grade levels behind where they should be, and learning improvement had not taken place at a sufficiently rapid pace.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Extended Programme neither provided the students with a curriculum framework suited to their needs, nor prepared them adequately to join any technical or vocational institution.

The hon. Member is himself an Educator who has worked with both extended stream students in the past and is now working with a Foundation Program. He can make a first-hand evaluation of the huge difference between these two. If I am not mistaken, the Member teaches the students Civic Education and Community Service.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can you reply to the question, please? The number of students in the Extended Programme.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Yes, I will. So, for 2022, 1,950 students were examined, 1,879 failed. In 2023, 2,149 students were examined, 1,957 failed. In 2024, 2,275 students were examined, 2,091 failed. In 2025, 1,460 students were examined, 1,382 failed the exam.

That is why Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was explaining why the curriculum and assessment framework were not suited for these kids. Number of students who joined a vocational and training institution in 2023 – 569, in 2024 – 1001, in 2025 – 1,047, in 2026 –

740. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we brought the Foundation Program to cure the pedagogical problem that was there.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay. The hon. First member for Vacoas and Floréal.

**POINTE AUX SABLES – SEWAGE SPILL – DECONTAMINATION STRATEGY –  
INQUIRY**

(No. B/925) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the recent sewage spill at Pointe aux Sables, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the decontamination strategy implemented in relation thereto, indicating the total expenditure incurred therefor, and
- (b) whether an inquiry has been carried out to determine who is financially responsible for the damages caused.

**The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr A. Boolell):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to the question. I wish to inform the House of a wastewater spill incident which occurred on 10 June 2026 at around 14:00 hours from a broken sewer pipe of diameter 280 mm, located near the SLDC Pumping Station belonging to the Wastewater Management Authority at La Tour Koenig Industrial Zone, following excavation works carried out by the contractor, Gokhool Engineering and Construction Company Limited for laying of PVC pipes. Now, this resulted in the discharge of around 400 m<sup>3</sup> of effluent into the natural water path leading to Canal Golden, Pointe aux Sables.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, several measures to contain the spillage and reduce the environmental impact on the environment as part of the decontamination were initiated by the Contractor in consultation with officers of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries, Wastewater Management Authority and the City Council of Port Louis.

Now, these measures included the following –

- (a) repair of the broken sewer pipe, which was completed on 11 June 2026;
- (b) temporary stoppage of discharge of effluent by nearby textile industry into the damaged sewer network;

- (c) pumping of effluent from casualty sites situated at La Tour Koenig Industrial Zone.
- (d) removal of dead fish and other aquatic organisms from Canal Golden to attenuate odours, and
- (e) pumping of accumulated wastewater in the Canal Golden bordering Pointe aux Sables by wastewater carriers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at 20 June 2026, around 3,800 cubic meters, including wastewater from the trenches and Canal Golden have been pumped out and collected jointly by the Wastewater Management Authority and the appointed representative of the Contractor, under close supervision of the Department of Environment of the Ministry concerned. The collected wastewater was subsequently conveyed to Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant for advanced primary treatment.

I am informed that the Wastewater Management Authority had, on 19 June 2026, submitted an interim claim amounting to - almost one million rupees - Rs941,927.28 to the Contractor and representing the operational expenses and asset deployment for mitigation of the environmental nuisances near SLDC Pumping Station.

I wish to reassure the House that the general public was regularly apprised of the situation through communications by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026 and by the Wastewater Management Authority on the 16 of June 2026.

In accordance with Section 109 of the Environment Act 2024, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change served a Programme Notice upon the Contractor on 15 June 2026, requesting the submission of a written Programme of Measures within two days.

The request made by the Contractor for an extension of one week to compile, review and submit a Programme of Measures based on the findings of the test results of the sediment and water samples was approved on 19 June 2026, subject to the following conditions –

1. The Contractor continues the pumping operation until the water complies with existing laws;
2. The Contractor undertakes necessary measures at its level and own cost to ensure monitoring on a regular basis, by an independent accredited lab, of the water

quality in the canal and lagoons, including the analysis of sediment for 10 trace metals, and this, in coordination with the National Environmental Laboratory of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Blue Economy Fisheries Division of my Ministry and the result of the analysis is expected, and I hope we will have the result by 02 July 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, upon submission of the Programme of Measures on 23 June 2026 by the Contractor, a consultative meeting was subsequently held on 25 June 2026 to consider the measures and assess their implementation on site. The following was agreed as part of the decontamination strategy of the site –

1. Removal of solid debris present in the affected watercourse, including cans, plastic material and branches by the City Council of Port Louis, which started as from 25 June 2026 up to 30 June 2026;
2. After the cleanup operation, desilting of the canal bed up to a depth of 15 cm to start as from July 2026 during the low tide, and the sediment removed from the canal bed will be sent to L’Agrément Saint Pierre, the yard owned by the engineering company. The services of a specialised firm will be contracted to treat and remediate the affected sediment;
3. The sediment will be replaced by sand obtained from commercially operated sand quarries;
4. continued monitoring will be maintained by the Ministry of Environment, and Agro-Industry;
5. The Forestry Services and National Parks and Conservation Service of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries will advise on plants and species for the rehabilitation of the vegetation along the canal and natural water path.

Pursuant to the Programme of Measures submitted, the cost of the remediation will be borne by the Contractor, in line with the Polluter Pays Principle.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the matter has been reported to Pointe aux Sables Police Station via OB 505/2026 by the Sergeant in Charge shift of the Pointe aux Sables Police Station on 11 June 2026. The case has been referred to the Central Investigation Division for investigation on 24 June 2026, and the investigation is still ongoing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Merci. Toujours dans le même esprit de transparence, l'honorable ministre pourrait-il déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée, les résultats des analyses environnementales effectuées, les rapports d'enquête qu'il aurait à sa disposition concernant cet incident et pourrait-il indiquer si des cas de problèmes de santé susceptibles d'être liés à cet incident ont été signalés aux autorités sanitaires à cause de la contamination bactériologique et chimique ?

**Dr. Boolell:** The hon. Member can rest assured that all relevant information will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly. As you know, there have been preliminary results. I can submit the preliminary results without any hiccup. But as to the firm results, we will have to wait for the lab to submit its report. As to the other reports, we have no problem. But the hon. Member does realise that we have addressed this problem forcefully and meaningfully to make sure that no one suffers from the outcome of this disaster.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Est-ce que je peux avoir une dernière?

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have a last question? Okay!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Par rapport aux mesures correctives, le ministre peut-il indiquer, surtout à la lumière des communiqués de la WMA, est-ce qu'il pourrait indiquer si des manquements opérationnels techniques ou administratifs, mais surtout techniques, auraient été identifiés et auraient contribué à cet incident? Quelles mesures disciplinaires ou correctives ont été envisagées ?

**Dr. Boolell:** I have replied to that question. I have said that the polluters must pay. The engineering company has to live up to its expectations and has to assume its responsibility fully and pay according to provisions of the law in relation to compensation that has to be disbursed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour!

*At 1.01 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.31 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please be seated! The hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

**ALALILA PLATFORM – TAXI OPERATORS – REPRESENTATIONS & NLTA  
APPROVAL**

**(No. B/926) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the introduction of the Alalila platform powered by Uber in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to whether –

- (a) it is in presence of representations from some taxi operators regarding same, and
- (b) the approval of the Authority was sought and obtained prior thereto and, if so, indicate the conditions attached thereto and, if not, indicate the actions that will be taken in relation thereto, if any.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would wish at the very outset to inform the House of the following.

Firstly, in regard to part (a) of the question, representations have indeed been made by some taxi operators, both at the level of the NLTA and my Ministry, against the operation of Alalila platform and there is an ongoing court case lodged by a group of 243 taxi operators against Logidis Limited, the company operating the platform and my Ministry.

The matter is *sub judice*, which implies that there is a need for me to proceed with due care while replying to the question as any action deemed necessary in the circumstances can only be taken subsequent to the determination of the court case.

Secondly, I have to mention that at paragraph 277 of the Budget Speech of 2022-2023, that is, four years ago, the former Minister of Finance announced that a new regulatory framework would be implemented by December 2022 to enable members of the public to book taxi services online. This measure was never implemented and has remained a mere *effet d'annonce*. There is no indication in the relevant files at my Ministry as to the reason why this measure was never brought to fruition.

Thirdly, the Government has, on 17 April 2026, tasked a ministerial committee, chaired by myself and comprising the Minister of National Infrastructure and the Minister of Health and Wellness, both former Ministers of Land Transport, to examine the representations received regarding the Alalila platform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at date, three meetings of the Ministerial Committee have been held, namely on 29 April, 11 May and 11 June 2026. As part of our engagement, we

have heard one after the other, representatives of the two main unions, representing some 7,600 taxi operators, that is, the Taxi Proprietors Union and the General Taxis Owners Union. We have, thus, taken stock of their perspectives, concerns and proposals regarding the operation of the digital taxi booking applications with a view to determining the best way forward in the interest of the taxi community as well as users of taxi services.

Furthermore, during the meeting of 11 June 2026, the representative of the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund presented the new website of the fund to those present, much to the satisfaction of the representatives of the unions, I must say.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the said meeting, we were informed by the President of the Taxi Proprietors Union that a dozen or so online platforms for booking of taxi services are in operation in Mauritius. Indeed, since 2006, beside Alalila, there are other companies like Yugo, DodoGo, Finova, Motaxi, amongst others, that are providing similar online services, each having a certain number of taxis already registered with them. The matter has, however, aroused concerns now among some taxi operators as Alalila has recently launched a new interface powered by the Uber technology, where it has stepped up efforts of canvassing operators to register on the new platform to expand its digital reach.

The representative of the Taxi Proprietors Union has further stated at the ministerial committee that he is against the operation of Alalila as there is an apprehension among taxi operators with regard to the matter in which Uber operates elsewhere, and that taxi operators fear that their business would be adversely impacted upon. Hence, the reason for lodging the court case. They also apprehend a gradual increase in the commission that will apply over time.

On the other hand, the General Taxis Owners Union is for the operation of Alalila with its new interface powered by Uber technology. It considers that Alalila will bring much benefits to taxi operators. Hence, I have to point out that the two main unions are highly divided on the question and so is public opinion gauged from comments on social media.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that no approval has either been sought from nor has been granted by the NLTA authorising Alalila or any similar platform to operate. In fact, there is presently no provision under the Road Traffic Act governing the operation of online taxi platforms and the NLTA does not interfere. Therefore, it has no legal jurisdiction in that respect.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to highlight that this matter remains a high concern for Government. To that effect, I wish to guide the hon. Member to the Annex to the Budget of 2026-2027, that is, what was presented the week before, wherein provision has been made at paragraph 16 (e) for strengthening of the regulatory framework governing online taxi booking platforms with a view to ensuring that such taxi services are safe, transparent and reliable.

The ministerial committee, which I chair, will submit its recommendations to Government for a policy decision soon. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, do you have a supplementary?

**Mr Quirin:** Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire s'il est au courant du nombre d'opérateurs qui sont regroupés justement sous la plateforme Uber, *region-wise*, si possible ? Et combien d'opérateurs de taxi font partie de la plateforme à ce jour ?

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have that figure. I will have to ask that information from the NLTA or that company.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, donc, avec votre permission, l'honorable ministre peut-il révéler à la Chambre si une étude a été réalisée pour savoir l'impact de l'introduction de ce service sur les chauffeurs de taxi à travers l'île ? Si oui, d'en donner plus de détails. Et si jamais ce n'est pas le cas, s'il compte le faire à l'avenir?

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** As I have stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the budget makes provision for us to come up with a regulatory framework on the subject. As such, I think consultation will shed much light on this question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, one question, hon. Beehook. One supplementary!

**Mr Beehook:** Can the hon. Minister explain to the House how these online booking platforms urge or enable taxi operators to open outside their *base d'opération*, whereas it is clearly stated in the law that our PSV taxi licenses are provided for operators to operate in a specific area known as *base d'opération*?

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** I would like to guide the hon. Member to jurisprudence on that question. In the case of Reading Borough Council versus Mudassar Ali in the UK, dated 24 January 2019, wherein it is stated the base of operation is one thing if you take a client physically on that base of operation, but if it is done through telecommunication media, the

issue is highly questionable. So, in due course, when the time comes for the preparation of that framework that I just mentioned, we will take that question on board.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

**114<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, GENEVA – BILATERAL MEETINGS – OUTCOME**

**(No. B/927) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the bilateral meeting with the Bangladeshi counterpart, Mr. A. H. C., held during the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, he will state the outcome thereof, indicating the undertakings and commitments arising therefrom.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the 114th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, I had bilateral meetings with Ministers of Labour and Employment of several countries, namely India, Nepal, Madagascar, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Rwanda, Ghana, and Botswana.

The discussion with labour Ministers of countries who send workers to Mauritius generally centred around collaboration between our countries to promote the ethical recruitment of workers, and in particular, to ensure that foreign workers are not exploited and do not have to pay any fees regarding their recruitment. Discussion also covered the rights of migrant workers and access to social protection.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the bilateral meeting I had with the Minister of Labour from Bangladesh, I explained to him the situation of Bangladeshi workers in Mauritius. I informed him that in 2023, the previous government had put a stop on the issue of work permits to new Bangladeshi workers because of the high number of Bangladeshi workers who left their employment to work illegally.

I explained to him that following the report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on work permit issues, Government had in September 2025 agreed to the resumption of recruitment of workers from Bangladesh in the bakery, textile, printing, press sector and other scarcity areas.

I, however, pointed out that the number of Bangladeshi workers who are missing and have left their job to work illegally for other employers are unacceptably high.

The Minister of Bangladesh informed me that in order to ensure the ethical recruitment of workers from Bangladesh, it was necessary to eliminate the middlemen in Bangladesh and he recommended that henceforth, all recruitment be done through the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training and the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited, which are Bangladeshi regulatory authorities facilitating labour migration and overseas employment in Bangladesh.

The workers will be screened tested before coming to Mauritius, and this will avoid the risk of them leaving their employers to take up employment elsewhere illegally. We agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in that respect.

A draft MOU has already been worked out and is presently under review. The MOU will be forwarded by my Ministry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for onward transmission to the Bangladeshi authorities for their consideration, following which approval of Government will be sought for its signing by both countries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me be very clear. It is not the policy of Government to favour the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers at the expense of workers from any other nationality.

Recruitment of foreign workers is strictly demand driven and I would like to point out that back in November 2024, when I assumed office as Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations, there were already 10,672 Bangladeshi workers in Mauritius. Today, there are currently 8,975 Bangladeshi worker, which is actually less than when I took office.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Beehook:** Yes, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister either tell us or Table to the Assembly the list of scarcity areas where currently work permits are being allocated to Bangladeshi nationals?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, actually, the list is worked out by the HRDC, the Human Resource Development Council. We have the list of scarcity areas sector-based. So,

the list is available on their on their website, but I can communicate a list to my learned friend.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Beehook:** Yes, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In a reply to a PQ put by hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger in this House, the hon. Minister had stated that 80% of missing foreign workers in Mauritius are Bangladeshi nationals.

My question therefore, pending the resolution of this long-standing, worsening social issue and the rising number of crimes involving Bangladeshi nationals, will the hon. Minister consider simply ban or freeze the allocation of new work permits to Bangladeshi nationals?

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the decision to resume the recruitment of workers from Bangladesh was taken by Cabinet and it is only Cabinet who can override this decision. But I would like to reassure the hon. Member that Bangladesh is one of several countries that falls under the 11<sup>th</sup> schedule of the passport regulation and anyone who comes from those countries require enhanced security clearances from the Prime Minister's Office.

So, before any work permit is issued to any worker from Bangladesh, it has to clear the necessary security screening at the level of the Prime Minister's Office.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central.

#### **STATE LAND – SHOOTING & FISHING/ ECO TOURISM – LEASES**

**(No. B/928) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to State land, he will state the number thereof earmarked for Shooting and Fishing/ Eco Tourism, indicating the number thereof granted as at to date, further indicating the –

- (a) lease period, and
- (b) number of such leases that have been cancelled or not renewed over the past three years and the reasons therefor.

**Dr. Boolell:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Forestry Service that 10,270 hectares of State land falling under its purview have been earmarked for shooting and fishing and ecotourism purposes.

In this respect, 54 leases covering a total of 8,696 hectares have been granted under the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act for the purpose of shooting, fishing and ecotourism activities. I have to inform the House that out of these, 48 leases were granted by the previous regime during the period June 2021 to September 2024.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since November 2024, the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Fisheries and Blue Economy has granted six shooting, fishing and ecotourism leases and these, for these applications, due diligence exercises were conducted first by the Forestry Service.

The applications were thereafter examined by a Shooting and Fishing Steering Committee chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry. This Committee comprises of representatives –

- (i) the Corporate and Business Registration Department of the Ministry of Finance;
- (ii) the Ministry of Tourism;
- (iii) the Registry of Association of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations;
- (iv) the Mauritius Police Force, the Forestry Service, and
- (v) the National Parks and Conservation Service.

It was only following the favourable recommendation of the Committee that the grant of the leases was approved by the Ministry, pursuant to Section 3(1)(c) of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act.

Now, with regard to part (a) of the question, a shooting and fishing lease is granted for a period of seven years. The lease may be extended for another seven years up to a maximum of 14 years, provided that the lessee has properly preserved game and duly fulfilled the conditions of the lease. On the other hand, an ecotourism lease may be extended such that its total duration does not exceed 20 years.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Forestry Service that four leases have been cancelled and two leases have not been reviewed over the past three years. The four leases that have been cancelled are –

- (i) The lease granted to Eco Deer Park Association over State land, Dayot and Mangin, of an extent of 250.76 hectares. The lease was cancelled with effect from 09 March 2023 as the lessee had undertaken activities that were outside the ambit of the lease and of the applicable legislation specified in the lease. At that time, the then Independent Commission Against Corruption was investigating into an alleged case of corruption involving the former Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, and an alleged case of money laundering connected with the association.
- (ii) The lease granted to Agrihunt and Lodge Ltd over part of State land of an extent of 75.69 hectares was cancelled on 17 January 2026 as the lessee had failed to settle rent for the period 08 September 2025 to 07 September 2026 by the set deadline of 01 of April 2025, which had been extended twice, up to October 2025.
- (iii) The lease held by Green Force Forest Company Limited over State lands, Rochery and Rampal, of an extent of 64.75 hectares, was cancelled on 04 April 2026 upon the request of the lessee.
- (iv) The lease granted to Société Hémisphère de L'Est over State land Desenne & Valton, Rochery, Le Clerc and Gallanty of an extent of 178.68 hectares was cancelled on 25 May 2026 in view of the several breaches of the lease and Shooting and Fishing Leases Act. The lessee had failed to settle the annual rent for the period 08 September 2026 to 07 September 2027 by the statutory deadline of 01 April 2026. It had also failed to properly maintain the State land and did not employ any watchman for the site as required under the Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards those leases which have not been renewed, there is firstly the lease held by Chassée de la Rivière du Post Ltd over State land, Salazie and Beau Vallon, of an extent of 78.98 hectares. I am informed that the lease was not renewed as there had been several breaches of the lease and the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act, including late payment of rental fees and encroachment upon plot of State land of over four hectares.

Furthermore, following the recommendation of the Shooting and Fishing Steering Committee, the Ministry did not approve the renewal of the lease held by First Direct Resort Limited over part of State land Raoul, of an extent of 175.18 hectares for a period 25 May 2019 to 24 May 2026. Contrary to the provisions of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act and the condition of the lease, the lessee failed to carry out shooting and fishing and eco-tourism activities and made no provision for any watchman on site.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to reassure the House that leases for shooting, fishing and eco-tourism purposes are being allocated in line with good governance practices.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and thanks to my very good friend for his very explicit answers. May I ask the hon. Minister whether cannabis cultivation has been found on certain on any of the lease land; not the ones he mentioned and does that entail automatic cancellation of the lease?

**Dr. Boolell:** I do not know, I would be surprised if there has been cultivation of cannabis, but as far as I know, it does not entail immediate cancellation because we do not know who is the person who is growing the cannabis. It does not necessarily mean it has to be the lessee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

**PAD & CO. LTD, RICHE TERRE – STATE-OWNED OR PRIVATELY-OWNED – HOUSING PROJECT**

**(No. B/929) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the premises on which stood the building of the former PAD & Co. Ltd., at Riche Terre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether same is State-owned or privately-owned, indicating whether an assessment thereof has been carried out for housing development purposes and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

**Mr Mohamed:** Thank you very much. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the plot of land referred to at Riche Terre in Terre Rouge is in fact State land, currently leased to a private company under a 60-year lease expiring on 30 of June 2073. The question of assessment for housing development therefore in respect of that site does not arise.

I must also add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this is a site that is found in a totally industrial area, as the hon. Member is well aware. And it would not be proper to consider putting a housing development of this nature, as suggested by the hon. Member, in the middle of an industrial zone. That would not be proper and it would be an insult to those we may contemplate giving houses to. So that is the answer.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, do you have a supplementary?

**Mr Caserne:** I have been hearing that currently, this plot of land is being transformed into a dumping area. May I request the hon. Minister whether consultation can be carried out with the Ministry of Environment so that proper works can be done to prevent this site from being further degraded? Thank you.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Member has put this supplementary question, I may add the following. The company in question that holds the industrial lease, was for running a factory of manufacture of wax, grease, lubricants for sewing machines, engines, power generators, mechanical and electrical equipment over part of State land at Riche Terre.

And that was dating back to 2013. Now, the Ministry was informed that as at 05 November 2024 by the Receiver-Manager, that is Price Waterhouse Coopers, that the company is now in receivership. As it stands, I am informed that the Receiver-Manager has contacted my Ministry for the proposed transfer of the above-mentioned lease to a new company altogether which has decided to purchase the assets or the leasehold rights.

Now, rent for the site has been paid up to 30 June 2020, and a Notice has been issued to the lessee on 01 June 2026 to pay all the outstanding rent, not later than 30 June, which is today, failing which, the Ministry will consider cancellation. So, as it stands, the person responsible is the Administrator, even for cleaning of that plot of land. So, since there is a new person coming in, that will be taking over the place, most probably you will agree with me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there would be no issue of dumping or whatsoever in the near future.

**SADC PROTOCOLS – RATIFIED & DOMESTICATED**

(No. B/930) **Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Southern African Development Community Protocols, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof –

- (a) ratified and domesticated, and
- (b) not yet ratified, indicating the reasons therefor.

**Mr Ramful:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since joining SADC in 1995, Mauritius has actively participated in the drafting, signature, ratification and implementation of SADC protocols across a wide range of sectors. As at date, Mauritius has signed 28 SADC protocols, out of which, only 26 have been ratified. Regarding domestication, the information is not available at my Ministry as same falls under the purview of the line Ministries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the two SADC protocols not yet ratified are the SADC Protocol on Statistics and SADC Protocol on the Tribunal. With regard to the protocol on Statistics, which Mauritius signed in 2023, consultations are ongoing at the national level with a view to its ratification. As regards the protocol on the Tribunal, which Mauritius signed in 2017, the instrument seeks to re-establish the SADC Tribunal as a regional judicial body to adjudicate disputes under a revised mandate and structure.

The protocol is currently under national consideration in view of its complex legal, financial and institutional implications. In accordance with established practice, each SADC protocol is reviewed by the relevant line Ministry in consultation with the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Finance, my Ministry and other stakeholders to assess its legal, financial policy and institutional implications prior to signature and ratification. Cabinet's approval is subsequently sought by the responsible line Ministry.

The instrument of ratification is signed and deposited with the SADC Executive Secretary through the appropriate diplomatic channels.

May I, with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, table a list of all the SADC protocols that have been ratified by Mauritius?

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil.

## CWA – FINANCIAL SITUATION

(No. B/931) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Water Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the financial situation thereof, giving details of loans entered into and currently being repaid and indicate the amounts owed to contractors as at to date.

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le président, la CWA m'informe qu'elle rencontre actuellement d'importantes difficultés financières principalement dues à la hausse des coûts d'exploitation, notamment l'électricité et les charges personnelles, alors que les frais d'eau sont restés inchangés depuis janvier 2012.

Pour l'exercice clos le 30 juin 2025, la CWA enregistrait un déficit de R 755 millions. Son passif total s'élève actuellement à R 11,2 milliards. Selon la CWA, les principaux facteurs ayant affecté sa situation financière sont les suivants –

- Le transfert de vente d'eau : l'eau pompée des *boreholes* de la CWA est envoyée directement au *Consolidated Fund*, pas dans les comptes de la CWA depuis juillet 2009.
- L'absence de révision tarif de l'eau depuis janvier 2012, ce qui a conduit à une situation où le coût de la fourniture d'eau est à R 24 mètre cube, ce qui dépasse largement les recettes générées par l'eau vendue à R 14 mètre cube. Donc, R 10 par mètre cube qui est perdue.
- Il y a aussi l'augmentation significative de plus de 20%, passant de R 4.8 millions à R 17.8 millions du prix des produits chimiques tels que chlore, la chaux, autres qu'on met dans l'eau et aussi une augmentation des coûts d'électricité.

Entre autres, il y a d'autres raisons aussi. Donc, M. le président, à ce jour le montant total dû au gouvernement mauricien par la CWA s'élève à R 3,47 milliards. De ce montant, les arriérés représentent R 2,92 milliards.

La CWA m'informe, M. le président, qu'au 25 juin 2026, donc ce mois-ci, le montant total des paiements dûs aux entrepreneurs, prestataires de service, fournisseurs s'élevait à environ R 697 million. Sur ce montant, R 470 millions sont dus à la *Central Electricity Board* au titre des factures d'électricité accumulées depuis plusieurs années.

Comme mentionné, M. le président, plus tôt, chaque mètre cube d'eau produit par la CWA revient actuellement à environ R 24 le mètre cube, alors qu'il est facturé à R 14. Cet

écart important, M. le président, entre le coût réel de production et le tarif appliqué pose un véritable défi de soutenabilité financière pour le service public de l'eau à moyen et long terme.

Dans ce contexte, une réflexion est en cours afin de revoir cette équation tarifaire et d'assurer un meilleur équilibre entre les coûts de production et les revenus générés par le service. Toutefois, je tiens à préciser que toute éventuelle révision concernera uniquement les consommateurs non domestiques. Il n'est nullement question d'alourdir la charge des ménages, notre priorité demeurant la préservation du pouvoir d'achat des familles mauriciennes.

M. le président, pour terminer, je souhaite également attirer l'attention de cette Assemblée sur le cas de certaines entreprises qui utilisent l'eau distribuée par la CWA à des fins commerciales. Dans certains cas, l'eau contenue dans une bouteille qui est vendue dans les supermarchés représente un coût d'à peine l'eau entre 3 sous et 5 sous. Nous savons tous combien une bouteille d'eau est vendue sur le marché. Je le dis avec sérieux, il est donc légitime de s'interroger sur la contribution de ces usagers commerciaux à la pérennité du service public de l'eau et de veiller à une utilisation plus équitable de cette ressource nationale.

Dans cette optique, d'ici quelques mois, des nouveaux barèmes tarifaires seront en vigueur pour certains secteurs. Merci, M. le président.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/933, B/950, B/955, and B/956.

Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

**ST FRANÇOIS XAVIER FOOTBALL STADIUM, PLAINE VERTE –  
FLOODLIGHTS REPLACEMENT**

**(No. B/932) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the replacement of floodlights at the St François Xavier Football Stadium, in Plaine Verte, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) names of the bidders thereof and the respective bid value, indicating the name of the successful bidder, and
- (b) contract value thereof.

**Mr Nagalingum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that on 19 January 2026, a tender exercise was launched through the restricted bidding procurement method through the e-procurement system by my Ministry for the replacement of floodlights at Saint François Xavier Stadium. The estimated cost of the project was Rs2,900,000, excluding VAT, and the closing date for the submission of bids was on 09 February 2026.

20 potential bidders were invited to bid. On 10 February 2026, the bids were opened and only two bidders had quoted for the project, namely –

- Mauritech Limited with a bid value of Rs3,469,200, excluding VAT, and secondly,
- Kabelek Engineering Limited with a bid value of Rs2,214,000, excluding VAT.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per the normal procurement procedures, a bid evaluation committee was set up at the level of my Ministry to evaluate the bids and to make appropriate recommendations. It is worth mentioning at this stage that an essential aspect of this procurement exercise was the preparation of the technical specification for the floodlights, which was done by an Electrical Engineer/Senior Electrical Engineer from the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of National Infrastructure.

In addition, an officer of the same grade from the ESD formed part of the bid evaluation committee to evaluate the bids. Hence, during the evaluation, the BEC noted that Kabelek Engineering Limited has not met technical criteria regarding the requested power factor technical specification for the proposed model and proposed simulation of the lux level distribution map.

The BEC requested that the bidder submits additional information regarding those missing information. The additional information as submitted by Kabelek Engineering Limited did not satisfy the BEC, and the bid was not retained. It did not proceed to the financial evaluation. On the other hand, the BEC found that MauriTech Limited has satisfied all the qualifications criteria and technical requirements as per the tender documents. Hence, the bid was considered to be substantially responsive.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that MauriTech Limited had quoted a bid amount which was 90% higher than the cost estimate. Directive No.16 of the Public Procurement Office provides that negotiation may be undertaken with a bidder whose bid is substantially responsive and does not exceed the cost estimate by more than 25%.

Accordingly, a negotiating team was appointed to invite the bidder to submit its best and final offer. Following negotiation, MauriTech Limited was awarded the contract for a contract value of Rs3,300,000, excluding VAT.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, à un moment où on demande à la population de faire des économies, où le gouvernement lui-même devrait faire des économies, nous constatons qu'on a alloué le contrat à une entreprise qui a *quote* R 1,255,000 de plus que son concurrent.

L'honorable ministre ne pense-t-il pas, dans un contexte actuel difficile, qu'il faudrait relancer un exercice d'appel d'offre de façon à ce qu'on ait plus de soumissionnaires, de façon à ce qu'on puisse réellement faire le choix qu'il faut et allouer le contrat à un prix raisonnable comparé, il vient de le dire lui-même...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, you have made your point.

**Mr Quirin:** ...il alloue le contrat 90 % plus cher que le montant qui avait été initialement préconisé.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

**Mr Nagalingum:** I have answered to the question; we had had 20 potential bidders that were invited for the bid and we have to go by our regulations. We cannot bypass our regulations or what has been established. So, if we do not do that, that means we are bypassing the regulations of bidding exercise.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle – it has been withdrawn.

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION – WASTE SEGREGATION & COMPOSTING**

**(No. B/933) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the elaboration of a Solid Waste Management Strategy, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) expected implementation date thereof, and

- (b) measures being envisaged to encourage –
- (i) waste segregation at source, and
  - (ii) composting of market waste by local authorities.

*(Withdrawn)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

**CATTLE IMPORTATION – PUNGANUR DWARF COW – CONDITIONS & REQUIREMENTS**

**(No. B/934) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the importation of cattle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the importation of the Punganur dwarf cow is being envisaged, indicating the implications thereof and the conditions and requirements therefor.

**Dr. Boolell:** Thank you very much. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Division of Veterinary Services of the Ministry that as matters presently stand, the importation of Punganur dwarf cattle from India to Mauritius cannot be envisaged. The implications associated with any potential importation of the cattle include, *inter alia* –

- (i) The risk of introduction and spread of the foot and mouth disease, and other transboundary animal diseases in Mauritius;
- (ii) The possible loss or suspension of the country's sanitary status in respect of international animal health standards;
- (iii) Increased veterinary surveillance, quarantine and biosecurity requirements;
- (iv) Additional financial and operational implication for disease prevention, monitoring and contingency preparedness;
- (v) Potential adverse repercussion on the local livestock sector and related economic activities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the Punganur dwarf cow is an indigenous and endangered cattle breeding originating mainly from Andhra Pradesh in India. It is recognised as one of the world's smallest hump cattle breeds with a height of

approximately 70 to 90 cm, weighing between 115 to 200 kg. The resilient and docile cattle is known for producing milk with high butterfat content of around 8%, making it suitable for small scale dairy farming systems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all imported live animals, products of animal origin for human and non-human consumption are subject to stringent sanitary, veterinary and biosecurity requirements and should be accompanied by import permit delivered by the Department of Veterinary Services as stipulated in the Animal Diseases Act of 1925 and Regulations. The import permit is designed to protect the country against sanitary threat in line with sanitary and phytosanitary measures of the World Trade Organisation, which lay down all animal health and veterinary public health conditions to be complied with and certified by the official veterinary authority of exporting country.

It is to be noted that the Attorney General's Office is currently drafting the Animal Health, Veterinary Public Health and Livestock Production bill. The main objective of the draft bill is to promote and protect animal health and veterinary public health. The Animal Diseases Act of 1925 will thereafter be repealed.

It is important to highlight that India is not recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health as a country free from foot and mouth disease. Nevertheless, it is in the process of creating a foot and mouth disease free zone and compartment as per guidelines of the World Organisation for Animal Health. Mr Deputy Speaker, in view of the prevailing animal health situation in India with regard to foot and mouth disease and taking into consideration the need to safeguard the sanitary status of Mauritius, we might as well opt for precautionary approach and we hope that this will be maintained and we will see how things evolve.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues!

#### **RODRIGUES – FISHERMEN – NATIONAL PENSION FUND – CONTRIBUTIONS**

**(No. B/935) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to fishermen in Rodrigues who have contributed to the National Pension Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) benefits accruing from contributions made thereto, and
- (b) number of –
  - (i) contributors thereof as at to date, and
  - (ii) those who are not in receipt of any pension, indicating the reasons therefor.

**Mr Subron:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we debated this morning, the National Pension Fund (NPF) was established under Section 37 of the National Pensions Act and contributions into the Fund were made by insured persons in employment in accordance with Section 13 of the said Act. Self-employed and non-employed persons could also contribute voluntarily into the Fund under Section 18 of the National Pensions Act.

However, as we stated this morning, the previous government discontinued the contribution scheme and introduced the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (CSG) as from 01 September 2020. Contributions are now made to the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA). Under the National Pensions Act, insured persons who had contributed to the National Pensions Fund may qualify for the following contributory benefits which are intended to provide income protection in case of retirement, invalidity, death or employment injury –

- (i) Contributory Retirement Pension (CRP);
- (ii) Invalid's Contributory Pension (CIP).
- (iii) Widow's and Widower's Contribution Pension.
- (iv) Orphan's Contributory Pension.
- (v) Industrial Injury Benefits.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that as at date, there are 1,151 fishermen in Rodrigues who have contributed as self-employed in the National Pension Fund. Out of the 1,151 fishermen, 418 are in receipt of Contributory Retirement Pension and Invalid's Contributory Pension. I am further informed that there are 733 fishermen who are not in receipt of any contributory benefit for the following possible reasons –

- (a) the contributor has not reached 60 years or retirement age to claim the CRP;
- (b) the contributor may have passed away before his or her entitlement to claim the CRP;

- (c) the contributor may have started to contribute to the National Pension Fund in 2012 and have less than 150 pension points to be entitled for a minimum CRP;
- (d) claims for Contributory benefits have not been made due to ignorance, or/and
- (e) contributor was not an insured person in the financial year preceding their claim to Contributory pension (CRP or CIP).

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Edouard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you. May I ask the hon. Minister, for those fishermen who are not in receipt of pensions and who do not meet the criteria, what will happen to their contribution? Will they be refunded?

**Mr Subron:** All contribution made is safely in the Fund and will be paid to the contributor when the contributor meets all the criteria. I can even disclose to the House that the total amount of NPF contribution paid by the fishermen in Rodrigues – which is 1,500 – is Rs7,899,925. So, they have been contributing, they are entitled as a matter of right to entitlements under the law.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Edouard:** May I ask the hon. Minister for those who already reached 60 years before 2025 and who have not received the pension, what will happen to the contributions?

**Mr Subron:** As I told you, there are many reasons why a contributor might not have been receiving his or her pension. I am not informed of any such particular case. If you have any such particular case, please inform me. I will look into the matter as to what are the reasons of this but the possible causes are as listed in my answer.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This question is for fishermen in Rodrigues.

Hon. Anabelle Savabaddy!

**VICTORIA HOSPITAL – HEALTH PERSONNEL – ALLEGED STATE OF  
INTOXICATION – INQUIRY**

**(No. B/936) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the photographs

circulated on social media on or about 16 June 2026 depicting allegedly some staff members of the Victoria Hospital being under a state of intoxication, he will state whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) outcome thereof, and
- (b) measures taken and/or being envisaged to prevent any recurrence thereof.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has taken note of two photographs and a video circulating on social media, allegedly showing health personnel at Victoria Hospital in intoxicated state. In fact, these photographs and the video appear not to be recent ones as the environment is currently not the same as depicted.

It is difficult to identify the two persons depicted in the photograph as their faces are not visible while being in a sitting position. However, as regards the video recording where an employee is admitting taking illicit substances, the said employee has been identified. He has been interdicted from exercise of the powers and functions of his office as attendant on shift on a casual basis with immediate effect under regulation 31(1) of Public Service Commission Regulations 1967 as subsequently amended as from 16 June 2026.

I am further informed that this employee was recruited in 2022. As at date, he had not yet been appointed in a substantive capacity due to his recurrent misbehaviour, bad conduct, frequent absenteeism and ongoing police case.

The police case is yet to be finalized. An investigation committee has been set up to look into the matter. The committee will also investigate into all suspected or reported cases of employees under the influence of intoxicating substances and making appropriate recommendations accordingly. In the meantime, two other employees who were suspected of taking drugs or other intoxicating substances, have been transferred to other hospitals.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the inquiry is still ongoing and my Ministry will take appropriate actions in the light of findings thereof. With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the code of ethics of public officers stipulate that they shall not consume any alcoholic drink, nor use and or abuse illicit drugs or controlled substances. Consuming alcoholic drinks in a public place which also includes the workplace is an offense under the Public Health Act.

On conviction, any person is liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months under Public Health Act. In addition, public officers are not allowed to smoke any tobacco product while on duty or in any public place or any other

indoor area which is open to the public or where the public is permitted to have access. The offender is liable to a fine of not less than Rs5,000 and not exceeding Rs10,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

My Ministry has taken the following measures to sensitize personnel in medical institutions on not consuming alcohol and illicit substances thereat. Continuous supervision, monitoring by heads of department and supervisors and conduct of surprise checks particularly during night shifts to ensure compliance with the standard of conduct expected of public officers. A referral of officers where necessary for assessment, treatment including counselling and psychosocial support at specialized centres, namely Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and Brown Sequard Mental Healthcare Centre.

Awareness programmes on the ill effects of substance abuse, working sessions held with ADSU to sensitize health personnel on substance abuse and setting up of a flying squad to search staff for any illicit products. Issue of a circular to inform officers on the consequences of consumption of alcoholic drinks during official hours and disciplinary procedures according to regulation 36 of the Public Service Commission in case of misconduct.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member.

**Ms Savabaddy:** Merci, M. le président. Will the hon. Minister confirm whether there is a direct link of illicit consumption of cough mixture and the personnel who were under the influence of drugs, keeping in mind that a half-filled, unsealed cough mixture bottle was disposed by pharmacy of Victoria Hospital?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is related to the utilization of alcoholic drinks in hospitals. This has nothing to do with the issue that the honourable member is raising. It had never been proved in any way. We have investigated and these are separate issues. The issue about which she has asked me a question concerns drunkenness, illicit liquor and drugs in hospitals.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member.

**Ms Savabaddy:** M. le président, pour répondre à la question de l'honorable ministre, peut-il dire si des *surprise checks* sont organisés par sa hiérarchie pour s'assurer du bon fonctionnement dans les hôpitaux publics et que fait-il pour résoudre ce problème ?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even I visit hospitals regularly at night and my state of health has gone down as a result of repeated regular visits at night these days. I do it. My officers are doing it. I am not in a position to tell you whether we are going to attain 100% success because whenever they consume alcohol, they will never do it in my presence but I can assure the House that the maximum is being done in order to control those bad elements in our hospitals. I have not recruited them. Unfortunately, they are here since long.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. second member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES – SAFEGUARDS & REGULATORY MEASURES**

**(No. B/937) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the increasing deployment of Artificial Intelligence technologies across various sectors, he will state the safeguards and regulatory measures being envisaged to safeguard citizens against the risks associated therewith, including deepfakes, misinformation, privacy breaches, identity theft and other misuse thereof.

**Dr. Ramtohul:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to answer both PQ/937 and PQ/948 together as they relate to artificial intelligence in the Republic of Mauritius, which also includes Rodrigues.

So, as we all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, AI is transforming every aspect of our society across sectors like health, education, financial services, justice, public administration and social media. While this philosophy, I would say, AI presents significant opportunities to enhance productivity, to improve public service and drive economic growth, it also presents challenges and challenges that are worsening for our society.

This includes, as rightly pointed out by the member, the creation of deep fakes, spreading of misinformation, disinformation, mal-information, privacy breaches, identity theft and cyber fraud. These risks may affect all citizens, including every member in this House but particularly children and in a lot of cases, women and elderly people, those who form part of the vulnerable groups.

Government has therefore adopted a proactive approach to ensure that AI is developed and deployed in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

This is why, in April 2026, my Ministry launched an AI strategy for Mauritius, abbreviated AIM, together with the FAIR guidelines, which constitute the national policy framework for AI governance. The FAIR guidelines are founded on principles like Fairness, Accountability, Inclusiveness and inasmuch as, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we talk about the integrity of people, now we also need to start talking about the integrity of algorithms which constitutes the functionality of AI and Responsibility.

While also respecting, and very importantly, the fundamental rights of privacy and freedom of speech and ensuring transparency together with security of data. The implementation of the strategy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir extends to Rodrigues. So, I will just talk about what we are doing in Rodrigues for a couple of minutes and that pertains to the second question actually. I undertook an official visit to Rodrigues in May 2026, during which, discussions were held with the Commissioner responsible for IT and representatives of the Commission for Education and other officials from Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

I am pleased to inform the House and the honourable members representing Rodrigues that there are several collaborative projects that have been discussed. There are several agreements we have come to. The first coordination meeting was held yesterday. There is one major initiative which is around Rodrigues IT FAIR. So, one of the things that we are doing is we have invited two students from Rodrigues to come in and participate in AI workshops so that they can prepare artifacts to be demonstrated during the IT FAIR.

One very important element is the establishment of the Computer Emergency Response Team for Rodrigues and an AI Coordination Unit which will work in close collaboration with my Ministry. My Ministry will also provide technical assistance for the deployment of the KOREK app for Rodrigues. So, the moment somebody who is registered as being from Rodrigues logs in, he will see the Rodrigues display in there. So, it will be totally personalised.

Coming back to the AI strategy for Mauritius, we have undertaken it through a phased approach. This strategy also provides for a gradual establishment of AI governance mechanisms. The risks that we are facing, we are not the first ones to face it. There are several other countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which have faced it. We know that the UK has gone through the principles-based approach. There is no legislation per se, even though there was the introduction of a Private Member Bill in the Parliament of the UK. But it does

not seem like it will be successful. While the European Union has undertaken a risk-based approach.

However, in Mauritius, what we have done is – this is what the FAIR guidelines are based on – we have actually taken a principles-based approach with the aim of ultimately giving legislative powers. So, after discussion as well with the hon. Attorney General, we believe that next year, we will be starting to define the AI Act for Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude, I would just like to say that the FAIR guidelines are intended to serve as a foundation for future governance of AI in the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, obviously, of which, all sectors that operate, whether it is education, trade, banking, financial services, can all build their AI guidelines based on the current guidelines that we have.

When we will be deploying and developing the AI legislation, we will do so in coordination and collaboration with all the other regulatory authorities. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, do you have a supplementary?

**Mr Seeburn:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the necessary regulatory framework and technical expertise are in place before Artificial Intelligence becomes more widely deployed?

**Dr. Ramtohul:** Thank you, hon. Member for this supplementary question. AI is already widely deployed in Mauritius.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just answer the question, please. Do not be vast, please.

**Dr. Ramtohul:** Yes, but it is totally linked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, come straight to the question.

**Dr. Ramtohul:** He concluded his question with ‘widely deployed’. Now, the measures that we are taking –

- (i) we have established the FAIR guidelines. We have as well the plan of giving it legislative powers;
- (ii) we are running sensitisation campaigns with different sections of the population;

- (iii) we have also undertaken training for staff within Mauritius for them to come up to speed so that they can actually develop applications and apps as well that are actually in compliance with the FAIR guidelines, and
- (iv) we are relying as well on the G2G agreement with the Government of India for further advice on how to strengthen it.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Ask for a specific question, not for wide answers.

**Mr Seeburn:** Yes, very specific this one. Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to how is the Government going to engage with international partners to ensure that our approach to Artificial Intelligence regulation is aligned with global practices?

**Dr. Ramtohul:** Thank you. So, this one is very specific.

To come to the response, when we developed the FAIR guidelines, we actually did it in line with what the SADC Regional Economic Block is envisaging, what COMESA is envisaging, as well as what the African Union is envisaging. So, it is totally aligned. Plus, we had the FAIR guidelines validated by the UNDP as well as the United Nations teams. Therefore, the approach that we have taken is actually based on international best practices.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

## **PRIMARY SCHOOLS' TEXTBOOKS – PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION CHALLENGES & SHORTAGE**

**(No. B/938) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to primary schools' textbooks, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the production and distribution processes thereof, and
- (b) state whether he has taken cognisance of any shortage thereof, including through the Zonal Inspectorate and, if so, indicate the –
  - (i) remedial measures taken to address same and
  - (ii) measures being envisaged to prevent recurrence thereof.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the PQ contains several sub-parts and each part will warrant that I provide ample details and information to the House. I will rely on your indulgence. Let me first of all point out that textbooks...

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, if your reply is long, circulate the answer, please. Circulate the answer!

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Okay. Yes, I will do that.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Can I have a supplementary?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, you will have your supplementary, of course.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Dans son discours, durant les débats sur le budget, le ministre avait fait référence aux projecteurs et aux *e-books* qui sont utilisés en remplacement des manuels manquants. Mais le ministre est-il au courant que dans de nombreuses écoles, les projecteurs ne sont pas opérationnels. Pourrait-il informer la Chambre, qu'est-ce que son ministère a prévu pour les élèves qui n'ont pas accès à internet et n'ont pas accès aux *e-books* ?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** *Merci bien, honorable membre.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, as per my information from directorate primary, teachers and students are using tablets for that. Also, all photocopies have already been supplied in the four zones of the country. Another query the hon. Member rightly pointed out – rightly –, I assure her that students are not going to be penalised because assessments are not based on books, for Grade 1, especially. It is oral based and activity based. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** L'honorable ministre peut-il informer la Chambre du coût de production et de distribution des fascicules photocopiés et sous quelle ligne budgétaire ces dépenses ont-elles été imputées?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Si on n'avait pas fait les photocopies, elle m'aurait posé la question de pourquoi on ne l'a pas fait. On a cherché un moyen, et on l'a fait. Maintenant, je dois vérifier. Je ne marche pas avec les chiffres en tête. Mais d'après moi, *even then I can say*, cela va coûter dans les alentours de R 200,000 et quelques. Je peux le dire pour quatre zones. Voilà, merci.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** J'ai une dernière.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The honourable...

**Dr. Gungapersad:** I am ready to answer.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Si l'honorable ministre peut donner la garantie que dans toutes les écoles, tous les manuels nécessaires seront disponibles avant la rentrée 2027 pour permettre la bonne progression du programme et le bon suivi des élèves ?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Oui. Merci, honorable membre. À part vous, nous tous ici, on est très soucieux que nos enfants reçoivent leurs *textbooks on time*. On a tout fait, M. le président. L'exception est pour ce livre-là en particulier, pour ce grade-là. Presque 95 % de tous les enfants ont eu leurs livres. Je vais m'assurer qu'en 2027, ils reçoivent leurs livres *at the right time*. Merci.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central!

#### **PENALTY POINT SYSTEM – CONTRAVENTIONS & SPEED LIMITS**

**(No. B/939) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to speeding, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of contraventions booked therefor since the recent re-introduction of the Penalty Point System, giving a breakdown by category of speed limits.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new version of the Penalty Point System became operational on Saturday, 31 January 2026, exactly on target, as announced in Budget Exercise 2025-2026 at paragraph 197.

In light of the first three-months report submitted to Government on the performance of the Penalty Point System, which is a novelty I have introduced, adjustment has been brought to the range of points on one of the most problematic issues, that is, use of handheld microphone or telephone handset while driving, which has been reviewed from the range of three to six to five to ten points, effective from 10 June 2026. Any further adjustment to the Penalty Point System will be data driven, implying that the overall system will evolve in a dynamic environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to come to the substantive question from the hon. Member, I have to point out that speed offences are monitored and detected through a network of 63 fixed photographic enforcement devices across the island as well as by mobile handheld laser radars operated by the Police at sites where speeding by motorists is a common feature. The

law provides for distinct tier of speed ranges and offences, each carrying different financial penalties.

Where applicable, corresponding penalty points are also applied, namely –

- (i) exceeding the speed limit by not more than 15 kilometres per hour attracts a fixed penalty of Rs2,500, but does not incur any penalty point;
- (ii) exceeding the speed limit by more than 15 kilometres per hour, but not more than 25 kilometres per hour attracts a fine of Rs5,000, and incurs two to four penalty points, and
- (iii) exceeding the speed limit by more than 25 kilometres per hour attracts a fine of Rs10,000, and incurs four to six penalty points.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to records, 16,128 contraventions have been established by the police for speeding offences since the reintroduction of the penalty point system on 31 January 2026 up to 25 June 2026 as follows –

- Not more than 15 km/h – 10,073 contraventions;
- More than 15 km/h but not more than 25 km/h – 5,205 contraventions;
- More than 25 km/h – 850 contraventions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I personally take serious note of the number of contraventions for the offence of speeding. I also note that the significant rise in the number of contraventions established in relation to the offence of speeding by over 15 km/h, but not more than 25 km/h, which was 3,429 as of 30 April 2026, stood at 5,005 as at 25 June 2026 representing an increase of almost 52%. In regard to the offence of speeding by more than 25 km/h, records reveal a similar trend.

Accordingly, 554 contraventions were established by 30 April 2026, while latest figures from the police indicate an increase of over 53% in respect of that offence. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated in light of its evolution, a decision will be taken at the level of Government in respect to any offence requiring adjustment to the penalty point system in due course. I take the opportunity to reassure the House that I will make no compromise in relation to road safety measures.

I note the uproar among members of the public claiming that Government has been overly strict on the issue of mobile phones usage behind the wheel, but allow me to point out

that over 500 driving licences have recently been revoked in Western France for drivers caught using mobile phones while operating a vehicle. It is certainly food for thought for anyone questioning our commitment to road safety.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I conclude, I wish to thank the Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the provision made in Annex to the Budget 2026-2027 in regard to the amendment to be brought to the Road Traffic Act to enable the use of safe city cameras to detect traffic offences, which includes speeding, and to give the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit legal status, at long last, as the national lead agency responsible for effective management and road safety. The TMRSU will thus become the distinct legal personality, a status it was devoid of during decades of its existence. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and my colleague, hon. Minister in my constituency. Recent figures published recently by the independent media showed that there is no abating in the number of fatalities and road accidents in the country.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** There is no?

**Dr. Aumeer:** Abating. It is not coming down. May I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has established any, my friend KPI is here, any Key Performance Indicators to evaluate the success of this penalty point system? And if so, what are they and have they been met?

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Like I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have not established a static system. It is a dynamic system that will be revised every semester in order to make the law become more strict and to inculcate the fear factor within the driver community. But I must say that the KPI is being, like I said, it is being sent to Cabinet every semester and we will adjust accordingly.

But one thing for sure, no matter how good a policy is, no matter how good a piece of legislation is from the road traffic perspective, the success of its implementation will depend on the police in so far as enforcement is concerned. Yesterday, since the hon. Member has....

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think you have answered the question. Next, you have a supplementary.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I know my colleague is very keen to make sure that there is success in this process. However, I wish to ask the hon. Minister

whether the Government or his Ministry has considered integrating driver rehabilitation courses, behavioural training, or defensive driving programmes for motorists approaching the penalty point threshold.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is in the law. When approaching the 12 points, the 10 points, there is a rehabilitation that allows a driver to not lose their licence.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The hon. Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue!

**PUBLIC OFFICERS – SCHEMES OF SERVICE – OUTDATED WEBSITE  
POSTS**

**(No. B/940) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the public officers, he will state whether he is aware that either not all the schemes of services thereof are posted on the website of his Ministry or if posted, some are outdated and, if so, indicate whether –

- (a) same will be remedied at the earliest, and
- (b) consideration will be given for the schemes of service of officers of parastatal bodies falling under the purview of his Ministry to be equally posted on the website.

**Mr Pentiah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I first thank the hon. Member for his question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is responsible for the processing and prescription of all schemes of service for posts in Civil Service, including those of Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Once the scheme of service is approved by the Public Service Commission and prescribed by my Ministry, it is uploaded on the scheme of service portal of my Ministry. The Scheme of Service Portal has been launched as part of the broader civil service digital transformation programme. These schemes of service are the foundation for recruitment and promotion in the public service. There are presently 2,509 schemes of service on the Scheme of Service Portal of my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in year 2025, after I joined the Ministry, my Ministry carried out an assessment

exercise with a view to reviewing the contents of the scheme of service web page. The exercise revealed that there were schemes of service for posts that had been abolished which date as far back as 20 years ago, which still appeared on the website.

However, consultations are being held and it is necessary with Ministries and Departments to ascertain whether these schemes of service are still valid and as to whether there are officers serving in these posts. This exercise is also taking into consideration all the changes in appellation of posts which have been recommended in the Pay Research Bureau reports and which have been reflected in the Civil Service establishment order. The exercise is expected to be completed by the end of this year, at the earliest November of this year. Following which, the scheme of service website will be up to date. However, it is to be noted that the that as scheme of service are subject to constant review, the updating of the website is an ongoing process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that the collaborative platform and document management system, the E-scheme of service, for short ESOS, has been developed by my Ministry to digitalise the processing and prescription of schemes of service. The ESOS will replace manual handling with a digital workflow for all review of scheme of service and aims to eliminate processing delays. My Ministry's is proceeding with a user acceptance testing and the ESOS will, subsequently, be rolled out in all Ministries and departments by the end of this very year. With the implementation of the ESOS, the discrepancies in the scheme of service database will no longer arise.

As regard part (b), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of the question, I wish to inform the House that there are 118 parastatal organisations which presently fall under the purview of the PRB, the Pay Research Bureau.

As the House is aware, currently, the final approval of scheme of service for posts in parastatal organisations rests with the respective boards. Once the scheme of service is approved, a copy thereof is submitted to the parent Ministry only for record purposes.

Consequently, prior to PRB 2026, my Ministry was not involved in the processing of schemes of service for posts in parastatal organisations and local authorities, except when the PRB was to be consulted on the salary grading of new posts.

As regards the scheme of service for posts in local authorities, they are examined at the level of the unified Local Government Service Board before being submitted to the Local Government Service Commission for approval.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, I am now informed that the Pay Research Bureau has, at paragraph 16 of its Report of 2026, observed that schemes of service of a few grades in certain parastatal bodies, falling under its purview, have been significantly amended without seeking the prior advice of the Bureau on any bearing on salary. The Bureau considers that this practice is inappropriate as the changes brought to the schemes of service are not according to set policies.

The Pay Research Bureau has therefore recommended that henceforth proposed schemes of service of Parastatal Bodies and local authorities should be first submitted to the respective parent ministries for examination, then to my Ministry for consideration to ensure consistency and uniformity and to avoid any malpractice.

I also wish to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the websites of Ministries and Departments form part of the official Government of Mauritius domain and posting of schemes of service in respect of parastatal bodies and local authorities on websites of Ministries and departments requires a policy decision that needs the consultations with relevant authorities such as the Prime Minister's Office, the GIS and the AGO's Office.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

#### **PRIVATE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS – GRANT-IN-AID SCHEME – STAKEHOLDERS & CONSULTATIONS**

**(No. B/941) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the recent review of the Grant-in-Aid Scheme for Private Pre-Primary Schools, he will state whether he has taken cognizance of the apprehensions expressed by certain trade unions thereon and, if so, indicate whether further consultations will be held with all stakeholders prior to the implementation thereof.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief. Yes, I have taken cognizance of the apprehension and yes, there will be consultations with stakeholders. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member.

**Ms Savabaddy :** J'ai quand même deux questions. Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre est-il au courant qu'il y a des craintes de fermeture des écoles maternelles en raison des faibles salaires proposés et du cumul de fonctions administratives ? Est-ce que cela sera revu ? Merci.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, I have received representation from the President of CTSP whereby they discussed these issues. I will be meeting them in due course and other stakeholders to discuss same.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The hon. Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or.

### **NORTHERN REGION – IRREGULAR WATER SUPPLY – NEW PIPES PROJECT**

**(No. B/942) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the irregular water supply in the northern region of the country, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures being taken and/or being envisaged, indicating where matters stand as to the laying of new pipes project in Pointe aux Canoniers, Grand Baie and Cap Malheureux, further indicating the budget earmarked therefor and expected start and completion dates thereof.

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le président, les raisons de l'approvisionnement irrégulier en eau dans les régions de Pointe aux Canoniers, Grand Baie et Cap Malheureux sont les suivantes

–

1. D'abord la présence des tuyaux défectueux dans les régions, sujette aux ruptures, entraînant une baisse de pression ou une absence d'approvisionnement en eau notamment dans les zones de haute altitude.
2. Ressources en eau insuffisantes entraînant des heures d'approvisionnement intermittentes, des réservoirs de service vieillissant de Rouge Terre, Mont Loisir Rouillard, le réservoir d'équilibrage de Poudre d'Or ont des capacités de stockage faible, insuffisantes pour répondre à la demande actuelle.
3. Le niveau d'eau des surfaces et souterraines réduit pendant la saison difficile.

Afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau dans la zone d'approvisionnement, le nord en général, la CWA envisage la réalisation des projets suivants –

1. Le remplacement de tuyaux entre Plaine des Papayes et le réservoir de Rouge Terre. Ce projet permettra d'accroître la capacité de prélèvement d'eau et d'optimiser l'utilisation d'un système de CPF du réservoir de Plaine des Papayes. Il y a eu R 30 millions dans le dernier budget, le budget qu'on discute actuellement. Donc R 30 millions dans le budget ont été allouées ;
2. Il y a l'amélioration du réservoir de service de Mont Loisir Rouillard dont la capacité passera de 2700 m<sup>3</sup> à 4000 m<sup>3</sup>. Ce projet permettra d'accroître la capacité de stockage et d'améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau dans la circonscription numéro 6. La préparation du dossier d'appel d'offre pour les études géotechniques est en cours. Le lancement est pour juillet 2026, donc ce mois-ci.
3. Ensuite, il y a la réhabilitation et la modernisation du réservoir d'équilibrage de Poudre d'Or qui est actuellement en cours d'évaluation au CBB. Ce sera pour qui va commencer en novembre 2026, cette année-ci ;
4. Ensuite, il y a la modernisation du pipeline existant, c'est un gros projet. Le pipeline existant à Grand Baie, sous-dimensionné sera modernisé le long de la route principale de Chemin 20 pieds. C'est un très gros projet et aux alentours sur une longueur de 4.5 km. Tout au long du Chemin 20 pieds, ce projet sera mis en œuvre dans le cadre de la ligne de crédit indienne – le *Line of credit* indien. Phase 2 est actuellement en phase de conception. L'attribution provisoire du contrat est prévue pour décembre cette année-ci et les travaux étant attendus en janvier 2027, donc au début de l'année prochaine ;
5. Ensuite, nous avons la réhabilitation extension de la station d'épuration des eaux de la Nicolière, sortant de 66000 m<sup>3</sup> à 130000 m<sup>3</sup>. Mais la CWA a sollicité et attend l'approbation du gouvernement mauricien pour passer à la phase 2 du projet ;
6. Ensuite, nous avons le projet de dessalement. Le dessalement fait partie du plan Marshall, élaboré par mon ministère pour mobiliser des ressources en eau supplémentaires afin d'améliorer l'approvisionnement en eau dans le Nord en général. Nous pensons ici à une usine de dessalement à grande échelle entre 10000 et 50000 m<sup>3</sup> par jour. Un appel d'offre a été lancé en mai 2026 auprès de quatre soumissionnaires, présélectionnés et qui devraient déposer leur offre d'ici

juillet 2026 ; donc le mois prochain. Donc le consultant va être nommé pour cette étude pour le dessalement.

Nous examinons aussi trois projets. Il y a un projet à Pointe aux Canonniers, renouvellement du réseau de distribution.

Nous avons un projet à Cap Malheureux, renouvellement du service main, le gros tuyau pour être changé, rénovation du pipeline entre Upper Vale et Cap Malheureux sur un tronçon de 5.1 km.

Le troisième projet est Grand Baie La Salette, rénovation du tuyau de principal de sortie du réservoir.

Mais ces trois projets, dont Pointe aux Canonniers, Cap Malheureux et Grand Baie La Salette, ces projets sont également soumis à la disponibilité des fonds. Donc nous avons demandé des fonds au ministère des Finances et nous attendons l'approbation du ministère des Finances pour aller de l'avant avec ces trois projets qui concernent votre circonscription. Merci.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal.

#### **WORK PERMIT ISSUES - INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS**

(No. B/943) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Work Permit Issues approved by Cabinet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the current implementation status thereof, indicating, in each case, when same came into effect;
- (b) the outstanding recommendations, indicating the
  - (i) reasons therefor, and
  - (ii) expected timeframe for implementation thereof, and
- (c) whether the Monitoring Committee announced at the time of the Cabinet decision has been constituted and, if so, indicate the number of meetings held and outcomes thereof.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in January 2025, Government set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on work permit issues under my chairmanship and comprising the hon. Minister of Tourism, the hon. Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, the hon. Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives to look into the difficulties being encountered by private companies in obtaining work and residence permits and to come up with recommendation.

It was also agreed that the hon. Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation would be roped in the committee. The Inter-Ministerial Committee met on several occasion and finalised its report and made 76 recommendations which were approved by Government on 05 September 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that more than two-thirds of the recommendation have already been implemented and the implementation of the remaining recommendations are ongoing. I am tabling the information on the status of each of the 76-recommendations made by the committee, as well as the date in which they came into effect or expected to come into effect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to (b) (i) of the question, as it can be seen from the information table, some of the recommendations have not yet been fully implemented mainly for the following reasons –

- (i) there have been delays in the implementation of the rules-based work permit system as I mentioned in answer to the Private Notice Question of 24 June 2026, because the tender exercise was not successful. I am informed that a fresh tender exercise has already been launched on the 12 June 2026;
- (ii) the implementation of several recommendations requires legislative amendment and modification to the standard contract of employment of migrant workers, for which the Attorney General's Office and other stakeholders are being consulted, and
- (iii) the implementation of certain recommendations falls under the Passport and Immigration Office, the Economic Development Board and other Ministries which are outside the control of my Ministry.

As regards (b)(ii) of the question, the recommendations not yet fully implemented are expected to be completed progressively during the financial year 2026-2027, and my Ministry is following up closely with the concerned authorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, the Monitoring Committee agreed by Government in September 2025 has already been set up at the level of my Ministry under the chair of the Permanent Secretary and comprises representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Passport and Immigration Office and the Economic Development Board. It was also agreed that the representatives of other Ministries, departments and organisations would be roped in as and when required. I am informed that the Monitoring Committee met in December 2025 and took note of progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations.

I am further informed that several sub-committees were set up to review the work permit fees, to review the enhancements to be brought to the National Electronic Licensing system and on amendments to be brought to the Labour, Occupation, Safety and Health and other legislations. Each sub-committee has met on several occasions. With respect to the Rules-Based Work Permit system, a steering committee is being chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs. As already stated, EDB has, on 12 June 2026, launched a fresh tender exercise.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Member!

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Je vous remercie. Je n'ai pas encore eu l'occasion de voir les informations qui ont été déposées sur la table de l'Assemblée. Mais permettez-moi de faire référence aux recommandations 40 et 41 du statut provisoire de victime.

J'aimerais savoir si le ministre peut confirmer si ces dispositions permettant à un travailleur migrant victime d'exploitation d'obtenir un permis spécial ou un transfert vers un autre employeur pendant le traitement de sa plainte, est-ce que ces dispositions sont opérationnelles ?

Dans la négative, peut-il informer la Chambre combien de travailleurs sont concernés et dans l'attente de l'implémentation de ces mesures, étant donné qu'à ma connaissance, il y a des travailleurs victimes d'exploitation qui sont encore en train d'attendre deux ans après qu'ils ont déposé leurs plaintes et qui se retrouvent, malheureusement, dans l'illégalité alors qu'ils sont des victimes ?

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the document tabled, you will see that under recommendation 40, the status is ongoing, and applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

But I need to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry is only concerned with work permits. So, once a work permit has been terminated, the residence permit of the

migrant worker automatically terminates and he becomes an illegal migrant. Therefore, it is to the discretion of the Passport and Immigration Office (PIO), whether to extend the delay of the residence permit or not.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** M. le président, il n'est pas question d'étendre. Il est question de leur donner un permis spécial pour pouvoir...

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

**Ms J. Bérenger:** D'accord.

J'aimerais savoir si ce n'est pas son ministère qui s'occupe des cas des travailleurs victimes d'exploitation, quelle mesure il préconise pour cela ? Et est-ce qu'il reconnaît que l'absence d'implémentation des recommandations crée une situation où des travailleurs victimes se retrouvent dans l'illégalité ?

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is responsible for looking after migrant workers who have been subject to breaches of Workers' Rights Act. There is a special Migrant Unit that is devoted to treating those applications.

Now, the problem in practice that we have is once the employment is terminated, what happens to these migrant workers? Who pays for their accommodation? Who pays for their food and water? If there is a request for a transfer, this is entertained by my Ministry on a case-by-case basis.

Otherwise, the worker has to go back to his country. He can come back to Mauritius when his case is heard, or he can give a proxy, a Power of Attorney for someone, including someone from my Ministry, to represent him in his court case when he is absent.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** M. le président, je suis désolée, mais il n'est pas en train de répondre à la question. Je ne parle pas du...

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have no control on the answer.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Je ne parle pas du cas où le contrat est terminé. Je parle du cas où il y a des plaintes, où les travailleurs sont des victimes. Il parle du *Migrant Unit*. Est-ce qu'il compte faire quelque chose pour que le *Migrant Unit* puisse traiter plus rapidement ces plaintes et grossir l'effectif de son *Migrant Unit* ? Alors que de l'autre côté, le *unit* qui est responsable de délivrer les permis, ils sont beaucoup plus nombreux dans ce *unit*-là ? Donc clairement, ce sont les employeurs qui sont protégés au détriment des employés victimes d'exploitation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** What is your question?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire pour que le *Migrant Unit*...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay, Migrant Unit. What do you want ?

**Ms J. Bérenger:** ...considère rapidement les plaintes, et est-ce qu'il compte grossir l'effectif de son *Migrant Unit*?

**Mr Uteem:** The Migrant Unit is heavily staffed already. The hon. First Member does not realise that when there is a dispute, most of the time, it resolves in the termination of the employment because the worker does not want to resume employment as he has been ill-treated or because of a dispute. So, at the level of my Ministry, our priority is to ensure that the worker gets its right.

But when there is a dispute, when the employer is not agreeable to the version of the worker, then, the case has to proceed to court. So, in this case, what happens to the migrant worker? If he stays in Mauritius, who will pay for his accommodation? Who would pay for his food and beverage? That is why, unless we have a new employer who is willing to transfer and take charge of that employee, that employee has to go back to his country.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Okay. You have done enough on this point.

The hon. Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

#### **CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS – MAURITIAN CANDIDATES PERFORMANCE**

**(No. B/944) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the performance of Mauritian candidates in the last Cambridge International Examinations, he will state the –

- (a) remedial measures being envisaged to address same, and
- (b) responsibility of the different authorities, particularly, the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division, in relation thereto.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two Cambridge International exams which are conducted yearly in Mauritius, namely the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate. The SC results for academic year 2025 were proclaimed on 15 January. Out of a total of 11,735 candidates, 8,130 were successful. As for HSC, the results for

academic year 2025, out of 5,794, 4,576 were successful, representing a pass rate of 78.98% for the Republic.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I will refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/99 at the Sitting of 24 March 2026 regarding the reform in the education sector.

As regards part (b) of the question, there is a Quality Assurance and Inspection Division, both within my Ministry and at the level of the Private Secondary Education Authority to provide feedback on the academic performance of schools.

The QAID conducts analytical tasks to assess the performance of students. Remedial measures are being taken to improve the effectiveness of the QAID with the ultimate goal of improving the performance of Mauritian candidates. These measures, *inter alia*, are –

- (i) the setting up of subject cluster panels;
- (ii) the identification of at-risk students;
- (iii) the academic monitoring of different grades;
- (iv) monitoring of assessments;
- (v) teacher accountability, and
- (vi) continuous professional development of educators.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures to reinforce the monitoring of the teaching and learning domain through the reviewing and structuring of the QAID is a key element, which is part of our ongoing strategy to enhance the educational sector at secondary level. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East!

#### **PRIVATE SECONDARY EDUCATION AUTHORITY – UPSEE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS – TIME OFF FACILITIES**

**(No. B/945) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the Director of the Private Secondary Education Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether the latter recently intervened in the granting of time off facilities to the executive members of the Union of Private Secondary Education Employees and issued a circular cancelling the 2017 Private Secondary Education Authority Guideline in relation

thereto and state the measures being envisaged to restore clear guidelines in respect thereof, in conformity with the Workers' Rights Act 2019 and address the actions of the said Director accordingly.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that time off facilities to executive members of UPSEE are presently being granted in line with the PSEA's Circular No. 116 of 2017 dated 20 July 2017. I am tabling a copy of the circular. In June 2025, UPSEE requested the PSEA to extend time off facilities to executive members of UPSEE Rodrigues branch. The matter was concurrently referred to the conciliation and mediation section of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations.

In this respect, the PSEA sought legal advice from the Attorney General's Office as to whether managers of private secondary schools and unions should be requested to comply with the Employment Relations Act in all matters relating to the granting of time off facilities.

I am informed that the Attorney General's Office has advised that in line with section 16(4)(b) of the Private Secondary Education Authority Act, secondary and pre-vocational schools remain the employer of staff of private secondary schools. Accordingly, requests for time off facilities made by officers of trade unions representing employees of the private secondary schools would fall to be considered by the employer concerned in accordance with the provisions of the Employment Relations Act.

The Board of the PSEA complied with the legal advice and decided that the provision of the Circular No. 116 of 2017 would no longer be applicable as from 2027. Consequently, requests for time off facilities made by representatives of trade unions representing employees from the private secondary schools should be considered by the employer, subject to the exigencies of service and provided that the smooth operation of the workplace is not impaired.

In view thereof, the Director of the PSEA issued a circular on 26 May 2026 informing all private secondary schools of this decision. I am also tabling a copy of the circular. I am also informed that executive members of the Union of Private Secondary Education Employees should carry on with their responsibilities without any impediment and the time off facilities are at the discretion of the rector of the private school.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East!

**GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT (MAURITIUS-INDIA) –  
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS SUPPLIERS – NEGOTIATIONS**

**(No. B/946) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Government-to-Government Agreement with the Republic of India for the importation of petroleum products, he will state –

- (a) where matters stand in relation thereto, and
- (b) whether negotiations are being held and/or envisaged with alternative suppliers of petroleum products.

**Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposed G2G arrangement with the Government of India provides Mauritius with several strategic economic and energy security advantages, namely –

- (a) Enhanced energy security;
- (b) Strengthening bilateral relations;
- (c) Greater supply stability during global crises;
- (d) Improved payment flexibility;
- (e) Long-term procurement predictability;
- (f) Potential preferential treatment, and
- (g) Technical cooperation and capacity building.

Under the Government-to-Government agreement, the State Trading Corporation and the Indian Oil Corporation Limited have been designated as the authorised agencies to negotiate and conclude the full framework which will serve as the basis for the long-term supply agreement. I am informed that the State Trading Corporation (STC), initiated discussion with IOCL early this year for a long-term supply arrangement of petroleum products for an initial period of five years with provisions for renewal and/or termination.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that several meetings have been held to negotiate the different aspects of the agreement, amongst which the specifications, pricing,

premium, payment terms, and currency contamination liability provisions, quantity tolerances, and other contractual and legal considerations amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the preparation of a framework agreement is not an easy task given the high uncertainty due to the geopolitical situation and the global oil market passing through unprecedented volatile phases. There was originally uncertainty in outlook of oil prices and availability. The problem was further compounded by the fact that even shipping rates had substantially gone up and there was no visibility of shipping freight in near and mid-term.

Hence, with a view to come up with a scenario that would match our expectations, we had to wait for some time till the international market stabilises and the price volatility normalises. As at date, negotiations have largely progressed and it is expected that by end of July, the parties would be able to finalise the agreement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member would agree that once a Government has committed itself towards another Government, it would not be appropriate nor ethical to engage in negotiations with alternative suppliers of petroleum products. Notwithstanding this, necessary arrangements have been made to meet the country's energy needs pending finalisation of the agreement.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Third Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle!

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION, SS & NS – MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS –  
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

**(No. B/947) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the medical practitioners whose services have been retained by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity on permanent and contractual basis or otherwise, he will state –

- (a) the minimum qualifications required therefor, and
- (b) whether it is a prerequisite therefor to have passed the examinations set by the Medical Council.

**The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Question B/947.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Medical Practitioners are employed on yearly renewable contract and remunerated on sessional basis to serve the Medical Unit of my Ministry. They are responsible, amongst others, to conduct domiciliary visit to elderly persons and serve on Medical Boards for disability assessment. My Ministry presently employs 332 such Medical Practitioners whose offer of employment are renewed on a yearly basis.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that medical practitioners whose services applied to be retained by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity on a contractual basis should be fully registered as Medical Practitioners in accordance with legislation in force in Mauritius. Our Ministry applies the same principle in advertising and recruitment for the post as the Ministry of Health does.

I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness that all doctors practicing modern or conventional medicine in the Republic of Mauritius require a registration with the Medical Council of Mauritius under the relevant provisions made in the Medical Council Act 1999 (as amended).

I am further informed that General Practitioners are registered as such after passing the Medical Registration Examination under section 22(1)(ca) of the Medical Council Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has confirmed that Medical Practitioners serving at my Ministry are all registered as General Practitioners and have obviously been successful in the Medical Registration Examination set by the Medical Council of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me inform the hon. Member and the House that the recruitment of Medical Practitioners on contractual basis started in August 2009. The last recruitment exercise was carried out in March 2020 and the PSC has approved the recruitment of 250 Medical Practitioners.

As from 2020, Medical Practitioners on contractual basis have been recruited and have been given employment for a duration of one year, which have been subsequently renewed. Last month, I renewed their contract of employment for a further period of one year. Detail of their employment is being discussed in the context of the disability reform of my Ministry and the Government.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just one supplementary because we are already out of time.

**Mr Ramdass:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state whether the doctors sitting on the Medical Boards, whether they have the requisite specialty in accordance with the disease for which the patient has applied for a pension? *Par exemple*, a specialist in cancer sitting on a Board assessing a patient who has cancer.

**Mr Subron:** I responded to this query in the last session but I would state that in the Medical Board, these are medical practitioners. Some of them might be Specialists, but it is a requirement under the law for the medical tribunal that the doctors sitting on the medical tribunal, are the respective Specialists of the case being assessed.

### **RODRIGUES – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY – CALENDAR OF COLLABORATION**

**(No. B/948) Ms R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the implementation of the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy in Rodrigues Island, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether a calendar of collaboration has been defined with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not, further indicating the measures being envisaged to ensure that Rodrigues benefits fully therefrom.

*(Vide Reply to PQ B/937)*

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

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/949, B/952, B/954, B/957, B/958, and B/960.

### **MOTION**

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

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER**

(4.21 p.m.)

**STATE FOREST LANDS – SHOOTING AND FISHING/ECO-TOURISM  
LEASES**

**The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a Statement to the House regarding Shooting and Fishing/Eco-Tourism Leases granted by the Ministry Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries.

Now, State Forest Lands (*Terrains de Chasses*) are leased for Shooting and Fishing and Eco-Tourism purposes in accordance with the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act. The grant of the lease does not give the right of ownership of the land, which remains with Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are presently some malicious posts on social media wherein State Forest lands are allegedly being put on sale to the public.

I wish to reassure the House that as per section 5 of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act, lessees of these lands cannot assign or sublet the whole or any part of their interest in the lease without the prior written consent of the Government.

Additionally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pursuant to section 11 of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act, leased State Forest lands remain in the ownership of the Government. Hence, no lessee has the right to put any leased State Forest lands on sale.

The Ministry has already reported the matter to the Mauritius Police Force for an investigation. My Ministry will take prompt remedial actions in case of any breach of condition of lease by lessees.

**PUBLIC BILLS***First Reading*

*On motion made and seconded, the Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. X of 2026) was read a first time.*

*Third Reading*

*On motion made and seconded, the Appropriation (2026-2027) Bill (No. IX of 2026) was read a third time and passed.*

*At this stage, Madam Speaker took the chair.*

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, please be seated.

*Second Reading*

**THE DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL**

**(No. VIII of 2026)**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

(4.26 p.m.)

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Domestic Abuse Bill (No. VIII of 2026) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, for every victim whose voice was silenced by domestic violence, to those who tragically lost their lives, this Domestic Abuse Bill (No. VIII of 2026) stands as a living memorial. This new legislation is a pledge that their suffering will not be forgotten and that this House, through this Bill, will transform pain into protection, silence into justice and despair into hope.

It is a declaration by this Government that the dignity, safety, and well-being of every person within the walls of their home is a matter of national concern.

Madame la présidente, je ne peux m'empêcher cet après-midi de penser à toutes celles qui n'ont pas survécu. À Sneha, à Vanessa, à toutes ces femmes dont les noms sont gravés dans nos mémoires et dans les registres de nos tribunaux. Je voudrais dire à leurs familles et à leurs proches que ce texte de loi nous donne aujourd'hui les outils pour mieux protéger les femmes, les victimes. Il est de notre devoir, et cela doit être aussi un engagement collectif, que plus jamais une femme ne soit conduite à la mort par celui qui prétendait l'aimer, alors même qu'il y avait déjà eu des signes d'alerte dans bien des cas.

Madame la présidente, la loi sur la protection contre les violences domestiques a été promulguée en 1997 avec pour objectif principal de protéger les conjoints contre les actes de violence. Elle a été amendée en quatre occasions, notamment en 2004, 2007, 2011 et 2016 afin d'élargir son champ d'application et de renforcer les mesures de protection offertes aux victimes. Malgré ces amendements, les violences domestiques continuent de constituer une préoccupation sociale majeure, encore plus aujourd'hui.

L'émergence de formes d'abus nouvelles et de plus en plus complexes, notamment les violences émotionnelles, psychologiques, économiques et celles facilitées par la technologie, a mis en évidence les limites du cadre législatif existant. Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de corriger une idée reçue et très répandue dans notre société, celle selon laquelle cette législation ne concernerait que les femmes. Ce n'est pas exact. Les données les plus récentes des *Family Support Services* de mon ministère le démontrent clairement. En 2023, un total de 7177 cas de violence domestique a été signalé, dont 5729 victimes féminines et 1448 victimes masculines. En 2024, un total de 5758 cas a été signalé, dont 4988 victimes féminines et 770 victimes masculines.

En 2025, ce chiffre a grimpé fortement à 7 562 cas, avec 6 478 victimes féminines et 1084 victimes masculines. Et pour la période de janvier à mai 2026, soit seulement 5 mois, 3 049 cas ont été signalés à mon ministère, dont 2 674 femmes et 375 hommes. La tendance concernant les abus physiques et psychologiques n'est pas à la baisse. Et ce fléau touche de plus en plus la gent masculine aussi. Il exige une réponse législative à la hauteur de sa gravité.

En ce qui concerne les *protection orders*, il y a eu une situation actuelle qui s'avère inquiétante. Les victimes qui retirent leur demande de protection.

- En 2023, sur 811 demandes, 216 ont été retirées.
- En 2024, sur 783 demandes, 199 ont été retirées.
- En 2025, sur 986 demandes, 221 ont été retirées, et
- De janvier à mai 2026, sur 477 demandes, 95 ont déjà été retirées.

Lorsqu'une victime retire une demande d'ordonnance de protection, c'est rarement parce que le danger s'est dissipé. C'est souvent parce que la peur, la dépendance financière, la pression sociale ou la perte de confiance dans le système l'ont réduite au silence une fois de plus. Les victimes qui retirent leur dossier ne mesurent parfois pas le danger qui les attend.

Je me permets de citer deux cas qui illustrent tragiquement cette réalité. Madame Y.B. avait déposé une demande d'ordonnance de protection le 21 août 2025. Le 25 septembre 2025, elle a retiré son dossier et est retournée au domicile conjugal. En février 2026, il a été rapporté qu'elle avait quitté le domicile conjugal. Et à ce jour, elle demeure introuvable.

Un autre cas qui m'interpelle. Feu Madame N.C. avait déposé une demande de *protection order* le 29 avril 2025. Elle a ensuite informé le tribunal qu'elle s'était réconciliée avec son mari et son dossier a été classé. Après son retour au domicile conjugal, en octobre 2025, elle a été tuée par son mari.

Madame la présidente, ces tragédies soulignent la nécessité de mesures préventives renforcées, d'une meilleure coordination interagence et de mécanismes de protection des victimes plus efficaces. C'est pourquoi ce texte de loi prévoit que lorsqu'une victime, après avoir déposé une demande de *protection order*, souhaite retirer son dossier, l'affaire sera transmise par la police au bureau du DPP. C'est au bureau du DPP de décider de la marche à suivre. Le DPP pourra alors demander aux officiers de mon ministère d'ouvrir une enquête afin d'éclairer la décision.

Madame la présidente, lorsque j'ai annoncé l'introduction du *Domestic Abuse Bill*, mon ministère, moi-même, nous avons reçu une représentation sur le choix des mots, remplacer le terme « abus » par le mot « violence ». Permettez-moi de clarifier ce choix. Le terme « violence » évoque presque, instinctivement, le contact physique, le coup, la blessure, la marque visible. Et c'est, précisément, ce que ce texte vient corriger – cette réduction. Une femme dont le mari contrôle chaque roupie de son salaire ne porte pas de bleu. Une victime de harcèlement psychologique quotidien ne présente aucune blessure photographiable. Un homme humilié et isolé par sa partenaire devant ses enfants n'a rien à montrer à un médecin légiste.

Si le titre de la loi est encore '*Domestic Violence Bill*', elle envoie malgré elle un message : chercher la blessure physique. Les victimes d'abus émotionnel, économique ou virtuel continuent de se demander si ce qu'elles vivent compte vraiment.

En définissant explicitement les violences émotionnelles et psychologiques dans le cadre légal, nous envoyons un signal fort. Ces formes d'abus doivent être traitées avec le même sérieux que la violence physique en raison des préjudices considérables qu'elles infligent. L'intimidation, la dégradation verbale, la manipulation peuvent avoir des effets graves et durables sur la santé mentale. Plus tôt les victimes le reconnaissent, plus tôt elles pourront chercher de l'aide.

Madame la présidente, il est important de mettre l'emphase justement sur cette forme de violence qui est financière. Les informations recueillies auprès des *Family Support Services*

de mon ministère révèlent qu'un nombre significatif de victimes ne réalisait pas qu'elles étaient sous l'emprise et le contrôle de leur conjoint. En raison de la confiance accordée à l'autre personne, elles ne percevaient pas que leur conjoint restreignait l'accès aux comptes bancaires, contrôlait les finances du foyer, les empêchait de travailler, accumulait des dettes en leur nom ou limitait leur indépendance financière. C'est souvent lorsqu'elles se retrouvent sans ressources et totalement isolées de leur cercle de soutien qu'elles cherchent de l'aide.

Je voudrais évoquer le cas d'une jeune femme exerçant comme professeur dans un lycée. Celle-ci, en plus de son salaire, possédait un véhicule personnel. Pourtant, elle ne pouvait pas jouir des fruits de son travail. Son bourreau l'empêchait d'utiliser sa voiture et lui refusait l'accès à ses finances. Elle a finalement trouvé refuge dans un des foyers gérés par une ONG. Il faut savoir que les violences économiques ne touchent pas un segment particulier de la société. Elles affectent tous les milieux socio-professionnels.

Madame la présidente, au-delà de l'élargissement de la définition de l'abus domestique, les victimes doivent avoir accès à de meilleurs services de soutien, capables de répondre à leurs besoins immédiats et à long terme –

- hébergement sécurisé ;
- services spécialisés ;
- accompagnement psychologique ;
- aide juridique, et
- soutien pratique pour les aider à reconstruire leur vie.

Quitter une relation abusive est souvent un processus complexe et difficile qui requiert un accompagnement soutenu plutôt qu'une intervention ponctuelle. C'est dans cet esprit que depuis août 2025, j'ai renforcé le dispositif de soutien au sein de nos 12 *Family Support Services*, offrant des services holistiques aux victimes –

- accompagnement psychologique ;
- conseils juridiques et représentation judiciaire ;
- aide à la rédaction de déclarations sous serment, et

- soutien psychosocial continu.

Je tiens à exprimer ma sincère gratitude aux ONG qui fournissent un hébergement aux victimes de violence domestique et à leurs enfants. Leur rôle est tout aussi important que celui de nos services.

À la suite des consultations menées sur ce texte de loi, certaines ONG, gestionnaires de *shelters*, nous ont informés que très souvent, lorsqu'une victime devait quitter le domicile conjugal pour être admise dans leur structure avec ses enfants, elle n'avait pratiquement rien. Pas de vêtements, pas de cartable pour les enfants, pas de médicaments. C'est dans ce contexte que le Fonds de solidarité nationale, relevant du ministère de l'Intégration sociale, de la Sécurité sociale et de la Solidarité nationale, a mis en place un dispositif en faveur des victimes de violence domestique. Une allocation leur sera accordée pendant les deux premiers mois de séjour dans un abri. Cette aide permettra aux victimes d'accéder à leurs besoins essentiels grâce à l'allocation qu'elles percevront.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à rappeler aux membres de cette Chambre qu'en 2004, en ma qualité de ministre des Droits de la femme, du Développement de l'enfant et du Bien-être de la famille, j'avais introduit le premier amendement à la loi existante afin d'y inclure toute personne résidant sous le même toit, lui donnant ainsi droit à la protection.

Dans ce nouveau texte de loi, je vais au-delà des personnes résidant sous le même toit pour inclure tout acte commis par une personne à l'encontre de son conjoint, d'un enfant de son conjoint ou d'autres personnes avec lesquelles elle entretient une relation. Si nous ne prenons pas en compte la relation d'interdépendance entre adultes dans la nouvelle loi, nous manquerons à notre devoir d'agir dans le meilleur intérêt des victimes.

*The Domestic Abuse Bill* définit comme membre de la famille toute personne résidant avec une autre personne et ayant la garde et la charge de celle-ci en vertu d'une décision de justice. Madame la présidente, nos tribunaux eux-mêmes ont su donner voix à la gravité de ces crimes. Dans l'affaire *The State vs Nubbeebuccus* de 2025, la Cour suprême de Maurice s'est retrouvée confrontée à une affaire qu'elle a qualifié de cas horripilant de féminicide. La victime, Sheena, B., n'avait que 24 ans. Elle avait signalé à la police des actes de harcèlement et de violence à de multiples reprises. Trois jours avant sa mort, la police avait averti son agresseur, qui est son ex-mari, de rester à l'écart. Trois jours plus tard, il l'a enlevé, torturé

pendant six heures et tué. La cour a reconnu que Sheena avait fait tout ce que la loi attendait d'une personne se sentant menacée.

Elle a cherché de l'aide, elle a signalé les violences et pourtant, elle est morte. Ses dernières paroles « *Pa pike* » résonnent comme une accusation. Non pas contre un seul homme, mais contre un système qui n'était pas prêt à la protéger. C'est ce système que nous réformons aujourd'hui à travers l'introduction de ce nouveau texte de loi.

Cette législation vise à renforcer les protections juridiques au sein du système. Les victimes doivent pouvoir accéder à des recours juridiques efficaces et à des mesures de protection qui renforcent leur sécurité et réduisent le risque de nouveaux abus. Cela implique de renforcer la protection judiciaire, d'améliorer les mécanismes d'application et de garantir aux victimes un soutien approprié tout au long des procédures.

L'amélioration des mécanismes de signalement est un autre objectif majeur de ce texte de loi. Je me réfère à la section 5. Le système est conçu pour rendre le signalement plus simple. En effet, le projet de loi prévoit que toute personne exerçant des fonctions professionnelles ou officielles auprès de victimes potentielles et ayant des motifs raisonnables de croire qu'une personne avec qui elle est en contact est, a été ou risque d'être victime d'un acte d'abus domestique, est tenue d'en informer le responsable de mon ministère et le Commissaire de police. Ce n'est pas facultatif. Cette obligation comble une lacune qui a coûté des vies.

Madame la présidente, mon ministère renforcera parallèlement ses campagnes de sensibilisation pour encourager le signalement des cas de violence domestique via la ligne d'assistance 139, disponible 24 heures sur 24 et 7 jours sur 7, ainsi que via l'application mobile *Lespar*.

Je lance un appel à tous les citoyens de ce pays : agissez en lanceur d'alerte !

Si vous êtes témoin d'un abus domestique, appelez le 139. Je vous assure que tous les signalements seront traités avec une stricte confidentialité.

Madame la présidente, en outre, en cas de manquement à une ordonnance d'abus domestique signalée à un poste de police, l'officier responsable du poste, indépendamment du lieu où l'acte a été commis ou du lieu de résidence de la victime, est tenu d'enregistrer la déclaration de la victime et de faire enquêter sans délai sur les circonstances de l'infraction. Une victime peut désormais se rendre dans n'importe quel poste de police du pays. Avant ce

présent texte de loi, des femmes étaient renvoyées parce qu'elles s'étaient présentées au mauvais poste de police, cela prend fin.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à remercier le Commissaire de police pour sa collaboration et son assistance à mon ministère dans le cadre des investigations menées par la Brigade pour la protection de la famille. J'appelle également à veiller à ce que la formation dispensée par *SafeLives UK* soit pérennisée par la *Police Training School* afin que tous les cadres de la police mauricienne bénéficient du même niveau de préparation.

Madame la présidente, la législation est importante, mais si son application ne se fait pas dans l'esprit de la loi, cela ne sert à rien. Face à la définition élargie de l'abus domestique et aux responsabilités croissantes des agents responsables de la mise en pratique, mon ministère poursuivra et renforcera ses programmes de renforcement des capacités afin d'améliorer les interventions et à évaluer les risques.

En décembre dernier, mon ministère a bénéficié de l'assistance financière et technique du Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population (UNFPA) pour organiser un programme de formation des formateurs multisectoriel, centré sur les survivants, en partenariat avec plusieurs parties prenantes dont, des ONG.

Par ailleurs, Madame la présidente, le tribunal disposera dorénavant de 7 jours au lieu de 14 jours à compter de la date de la demande pour convoquer la personne mise en cause et statuer. 7 jours, pas 14 jours comme c'est le cas aujourd'hui, parce que derrière chaque jour gagné, il y a une femme qui dort un peu moins dans la peur. Une victime qui attend n'est pas en sécurité, elle est en sursis. Réduire ce délai de moitié, ce n'est pas une retouche procédurale, c'est reconnaître que le temps dans ces situations n'est jamais neutre, il peut coûter une vie.

Par ailleurs, bien que la durée maximale des ordonnances de protection, *protection order*, demeure de deux ans comme dans la loi existante, ce nouveau texte de loi à la section 8(4) va plus loin. Le tribunal, au moment d'émettre l'ordonnance, demandera un réexamen périodique tous les 3 mois pour évaluer le comportement de l'auteur des violences. Ce qui veut dire qu'une ordonnance de protection n'est plus un simple document, c'est un instrument actif et contrôlé. À la place des *occupation and tenancy orders* prévus par la loi existante, ce nouveau texte de loi, à la section 13, introduit des *exclusion orders*.

Lorsque la cohabitation continue représente un risque, l'auteur des violences quitte le domicile et non la victime. La section 13(4) prévoit que la victime ne devrait pas avoir à

déraciner ses enfants, quitter son foyer, abandonner son environnement en raison de la violence de son conjoint ou sa conjointe. Lorsque l'exclusion du domicile n'est pas possible, le tribunal peut ordonner à l'auteur des violences de pourvoir à un logement alternatif pour la victime. La charge incombe à celui qui a créé le danger et non à celle qui en a souffert.

Madame la présidente, la section 17 introduit un *intervention order* visant à la réhabilitation des auteurs. Car un auteur de violence non réhabilité récidivera, peut-être contre la même victime, peut-être contre une autre. Les données sont claires, la sanction sans intervention ne réduit pas la récidive, elle la reporte. C'est ainsi que le tribunal peut ordonner une évaluation psychologique de l'auteur par un psychologue de mon ministère afin de déterminer s'il serait dans son intérêt de suivre un programme de réhabilitation. Sur la base de ce rapport à la section 17(2), le tribunal peut, avant de statuer sur l'ordonnance de protection, émettre une ordonnance d'intervention obligeant l'auteur à participer au programme. Le respect de cette ordonnance est contrôlé et communiqué au tribunal. Le manquement à comparaître est passible d'une amende n'excédant pas 50 000 roupies comme prévoit la section 17(5).

Madame la présidente, l'abus domestique doit être traité comme un comportement criminel grave. Une personne qui bat sa victime dans la rue fait face à des conséquences. Une personne qui bat sa victime dans l'intimité de leur foyer doit faire face aux mêmes conséquences. Le cadre domestique n'est pas un bouclier. Il ne l'a jamais été. En vertu de ce texte de loi, il ne le sera plus jamais.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi crée un *Domestic Abuse Coordinating Panel*. Ce comité sera chargé –

- de coordonner les cas d'abus domestique signalés à mon ministère, dans les postes de police ou dans toute autre institution et aux ONG traitant ces cas ;
- d'examiner les dossiers qui lui sont soumis, et
- de faire des recommandations aux institutions publiques.

En parallèle, le projet de loi prévoit la mise en place des *multi-agency risk assessment committees* au sein de l'ensemble des *Family Support Services* en vertu de la section 25. Ces comités seront chargés de procéder à des évaluations des risques dans les cas traités par les institutions publiques et les ONG, de définir les mesures correctives à adopter, et de soumettre des rapports au *Coordinating Panel*, comme le stipule la section 27.

Madame la présidente, je souhaite souligner que les contraventions prévues par ce texte de loi, à la section 39, comportent des sanctions considérablement renforcées par rapport à la loi existante, avec l'introduction de la servitude pénale pour une durée n'excédant pas 10 ans en cas de troisième condamnation ou de condamnation ultérieure. Toute personne qui omet délibérément de se conformer à une ordonnance en matière d'abus domestique commet une infraction et, est sur condamnation passible –

- d'une première condamnation, d'une amende n'excédant pas R 50 000 et d'une peine d'emprisonnement n'excédant pas 12 mois ;
- d'une deuxième condamnation, d'une amende n'excédant pas R 100 000 et d'une peine d'emprisonnement n'excédant pas 3 ans ;
- d'une troisième condamnation ou d'une condamnation ultérieure, de la servitude pénale pour une durée n'excédant pas 10 ans.

Ces sanctions envoient un message sans équivoque : l'abus domestique est un crime et il sera puni en conséquence.

Madame la présidente, la loi est un processus dynamique. Bien qu'il s'agisse d'une législation complète, le *Domestic Abuse Act* révélera, au fil du temps et des cas soumis aux services prestataires, des lacunes qui devront être comblées par des amendements appropriés afin de mieux protéger les victimes. Les membres de cette Chambre noteront que deux éléments importants sont absents du *Domestic Abuse Bill* : le concept de féminicide et le viol conjugal. Ces questions sont traitées dans le Code pénal, présenté en première lecture par mon collègue, l'*Attorney General*.

Le projet de loi fonctionne de concert avec d'autres législations afin de couvrir tous les actes répréhensibles, qu'ils soient commis dans le monde physique ou l'univers virtuel. Les préjudices en ligne, par exemple, *online harms*, sont des problèmes très grave qui sont traités dans le cadre de la *Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021*. Cette législation traduit les auteurs de ces actes en justice, et cette loi sera également appliquée dans toute sa rigueur.

Madame la présidente, je conclurai en remerciant toutes celles et ceux qui ont apporté leur contribution à l'élaboration de ce texte. L'*Attorney General* et ses officiers, les officiers de mon ministère, le Parliamentary Gender Caucus, la Mauritius Bar Council, la Mauritius Law Society et les ONG partenaires. Chacun a posé une pierre à cet édifice. Mais, mes remerciements les plus sincères, les plus profonds vont aux survivantes – à celles qui ont eu

le courage de s'asseoir en face de nous, de rouvrir des blessures qui n'étaient pas encore cicatrisées et de nous dire : « Voilà ce que la loi n'a pas su faire, n'a pas su voir. Voilà ce qu'elle doit désormais protéger. » Ce texte de loi, Madame la présidente, porte leur voix.

Madame la présidente, je pense en cet instant à Nathacha Appanah, écrivaine mauricienne, l'une des nôtres. Dans 'La nuit au cœur', prix féminin 2025, elle témoigne de six années passées sous l'emprise d'un homme qui l'avait, je cite, « retourné comme un gant ». Une histoire qu'elle appelle – je cite encore une fois – « l'angle mort de sa vie ». Dans ce livre, elle raconte aussi la mort de sa cousine Emma, tuée en 2000 par son compagnon, ici même, sur notre île.

Madame la présidente, elle écrit, et je cite –

« Il faut être à l'intérieur d'un foyer violent pour en comprendre les codes et les lois spécifiques. Le foyer violent est un monde à part et ceux qui n'y sont pas disent des phrases telles que : Pourquoi elle n'est pas partie ? (...) »

C'est précisément à cette question que ce texte répond, non pas en jugeant celles qui sont restées, mais en construisant enfin un système digne de celles qui ont osé partir et de celles qui n'ont pas pu le faire.

Madam Speaker, I now commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.**

**Madam Speaker:** I think we can break for tea. One hour? No. Half an hour.

*At 4.57 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.36 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

**Madam Speaker:** Please be seated.

Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(5.37 p.m.)

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard):** Merci, Madame la présidente. Merci de me donner la parole pour intervenir sur le *Domestic Abuse Bill*, un projet de loi qui

avait été enclenché sous l'ancien gouvernement, et qui, d'après mes informations, était arrivé à un stade assez avancé.

Au fait, Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi aurait dû être parmi les premiers de l'actuel gouvernement. On a perdu du temps, Madame la présidente, et malheureusement, on a aussi perdu des vies.

Avant de parler de ce projet de loi, je voudrais, Madame la présidente, parler de la réalité de toutes les femmes, mères, filles et sœurs qui nous écoutent aujourd'hui. Notre pays traverse une crise silencieuse, mais meurtrière. Et les chiffres ne mentent pas, Madame la présidente. Ils doivent nous réveiller. Ils doivent nous interpeller.

Je vais citer quelques chiffres. Je pense que la ministre, lors de son intervention, a aussi cité les chiffres. Je vais prendre que quelques chiffres, Madame la présidente. Premièrement, selon les Nations unies, 24% des femmes mauriciennes ont subi une forme de violence fondée sur le genre. Depuis novembre 2024, 4 127 cas de violences conjugales ont été signalés, dont 3 042 impliquant des violences physiques. Une femme sur quatre a déjà été victime de violence selon les données du ministère et de *Gender Links*.

Autre fait, le coût économique de ces violences. Madame la présidente, environ 0.6% du PIB de notre pays, soit des milliards de roupies perdus en soins, en perte de productivité et en souffrance humaine. Et le plus tragique, Madame la présidente, moins de 40% des femmes victimes demandent de l'aide. Pendant ce temps, des femmes meurent. Le féminicide n'est pas un mot abstrait, Madame la présidente, c'est une réalité mauricienne confirmée par les ONG, les survivantes et les instances internationales.

Des femmes ont été tuées alors qu'elles détenaient des *protection orders*. Des enfants ont perdu leurs mères. Des familles sont brisées. Pourtant, Madame la présidente, malheureusement, les défis persistent. Pas de signalement obligatoire ; des données fragmentées ; une coordination insuffisante entre la police, les tribunaux, nos tribunaux, et les services sociaux. C'est dans ce contexte d'urgence que j'interviens, Madame la présidente, sur le projet de loi relatif aux violences domestiques.

Madame la présidente, cet après-midi, je me tiens au côté de chaque femme à qui on a déjà dit de se taire, de patienter, de préserver l'honneur de la famille ou de faire des efforts. Nous sommes avec les petites filles qui ont grandi dans la peur du bruit d'une clé dans la serrure. Nous sommes avec les familles qui ont enterré des filles, des sœurs et des amies

parties bien trop tôt. Et nous sommes avec les survivantes courageuses qui chaque matin choisissent encore de se battre pour leur sécurité, leur dignité et leur droit de vivre sans peur.

Madame la présidente, nous accueillons favorablement ce projet de loi. Nous saluons le fait qu'il reconnaisse enfin que le contrôle économique, le harcèlement numérique, la torture psychologique, et même le fait de blesser un animal domestique, sont des instruments de violence conjugale. Nous saluons aussi la disposition qui oblige la police à transmettre un dossier au Directeur des poursuites publiques, même si la victime retire sa plainte. Ce sont des mesures réelles et nécessaires, Madame la présidente.

Mais, Madame la présidente, une loi sur papier n'arrête pas un geste violent. Elle n'efface pas une menace murmurée dans l'ombre. Elle ne ramène pas à la vie une femme assassinée alors qu'elle détenait une ordonnance de protection. Elle ne sauvera pas la prochaine victime si nous votons un texte de loi qui semble solide qu'en théorie, mais qui laisse des failles dangereuses dans la pratique.

Madame la présidente, je parlerai avec clarté, car les femmes de notre pays méritent des mots simples, pas du jargon juridique. Je parlerai avec fermeté, car le silence nous a déjà coûté trop de vies. Et je parlerai avec force, Madame la présidente, car les violences conjugales ne sont pas une affaire de famille seulement, c'est une urgence nationale.

Dans un premier temps, Madame la présidente, la loi doit enfin nommer le féminicide. Quand un homme tue une femme qu'il a contrôlée, menacée ou brutalisée, il ne s'agit pas juste d'un autre homicide. C'est, malheureusement, l'acte final d'un schéma documenté. C'est un meurtre fondé sur le genre. Pourtant, ce projet de loi le traite comme n'importe quel autre crime.

Madame la présidente, nous ne pouvons plus ignorer cette vérité. Des femmes sont tuées parce qu'elles sont des femmes et parce que nos systèmes ont échoué à stopper l'escalade. L'heure est venue de modifier le Code pénal afin de reconnaître le féminicide comme une infraction distincte et aggravée. Nommez-le, suivez-le, punissez-le à la hauteur de sa gravité. J'ai écouté la ministre et d'après elle, je comprends que c'est dans le *Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill*. Merci, Madame la ministre.

Deuxièmement, le signalement obligatoire doit s'accompagner de sécurité, pas de peur. La section 5 du projet de loi oblige les médecins, les infirmiers, les travailleurs sociaux à

signaler les cas suspects. L'intention, je dois le reconnaître, Madame la présidente, est fort louable. Mais, sans garde-fou, l'effet sera inverse. Les femmes cesseront de consulter. Elles éviteront les centres d'écoute. Elles souffriront en silence par peur que le signalement ne déclenche des violences ou ne les expose à un danger immédiat. Le signalement ne doit jamais passer avant la sécurité. Alors, je demanderai à Madame la ministre d'apporter des amendements clairs à cette section afin d'inclure –

- consentement lorsque cela est possible sans risque ;
- évaluation des dangers par du personnel formé avant tout signalement, et
- protection des professionnels qui retardent raisonnablement un rapport pour éviter un préjudice immédiat.

Madame la présidente, les séances de conseil ne remplacent pas la justice. La section 40 permet aux juges, dans des cas exceptionnels, de remplacer la peine par un suivi psychologique. Madame la présidente, les violences conjugales ne sont pas un conflit de couple. Ce n'est pas non plus un problème de colère. Madame la présidente, c'est un crime de pouvoir, de contrôle et de violation répétée.

Proposer un accompagnement à la place d'une vraie peine envoie, à mon avis – je le dis –, un message dangereux aux agresseurs, car ils seront pardonnés. Cela dit aux victimes que leur traumatisme est négociable. La réhabilitation doit faire partie d'une condamnation, jamais s'y substituer, Madame la présidente. Supprimer cette échappatoire, malheureusement, Madame la présidente, n'aura pas les résultats qu'on attend.

Madame la présidente, la coordination ne peut pas attendre. Elle doit fonctionner. Je note que dans ce projet de loi, à la section 23, on va créer un panel de coordination qui peut-être, d'après ce qui est dit dans le projet de loi, va se rencontrer que deux fois par an et des comités régionaux qui vont se réunir chaque trimestre. Madame la présidente, les femmes en crise n'ont pas des mois à attendre. La sécurité est urgente.

Je note, et j'attire l'attention de la ministre là-dessus, Madame la présidente, que ces instances ne sont composées que des représentants de l'État. Où sont les refuges pour femmes ? Où sont les ONG qui répondent au 139 chaque jour ? Où sont les survivantes qui savent exactement où le système flanche ?

Madame la présidente, la coordination multi-institutionnelle ne fonctionne que si elle inclut celles qui vivent cette réalité au quotidien. Pourquoi pas imposer, Madame la présidente, un rapport public trimestriel ? Et pourquoi ne pas aussi inclure des représentants d'ONG accréditées et des survivantes avec droit de vote dans ces comités de coordination, Madame la présidente ?

Madame la présidente, on ne peut pas corriger ce qu'on refuse de mesurer. Le projet de loi, à la section 36, demande aux tribunaux de tenir des registres, mais n'exige ni collecte centralisée, ni rapport public, ni même pas un contrôle parlementaire. Et on est en droit de se poser cette série de questions. Combien d'ordonnances de protection sont ignorées dans ce pays, Madame la présidente ? Combien de refuges sont saturés ? Combien de dossiers tombent dans les failles entre police, tribunaux et services sociaux ? Et si nous ne les comptons pas, Madame la présidente, nous les abandonnons.

Je demande aussi qu'on amende la section concernée pour obliger le ministère de déposer chaque année à l'Assemblée Nationale un rapport public sur les violences conjugales avec données par catégorie, taux de respect des ordonnances, capacité d'accueil, exécution budgétaire et des recommandations claires. La transparence, Madame la présidente, sauve des vies.

Madame la présidente, des femmes meurent aujourd'hui. Les ordonnances de protection ont besoin d'être appliquées. Les agents de terrain ont besoin de formation. Les tribunaux ont besoin des salles d'attente sécurisées. Les refuges ont besoin d'une capacité 24 heures. Surtout, et je le dis, dans les zones qui sont isolées, mais aussi, je peux prendre en considération dans ce que j'ai dit, notre petite île Rodrigue. Les psychologues et les programmes de réhabilitation ont besoin de budget. Il nous faut une bonne feuille de route et les moyens financiers nécessaires afin de lutter contre la violence domestique.

Madame la présidente, le temps de faire des beaux discours est terminé maintenant. Et à Madame l'honorable ministre, et je le dis avec beaucoup de respect, mais sans compromis. Nous ne voterons pas une loi qui semble progressiste sur papier, mais qui lâche la femme qui appelle au secours à 2hr du matin. Nous ne célébrerons pas la procédure pendant que des femmes continuent de payer le prix ultime. Nous sommes prêts à donner tout support dans cette lutte contre la violence domestique. Mais nous ne changerons pas la sécurité contre la rapidité. Nous n'allons pas sacrifier la responsabilité pour l'accommodité politique, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de conclure maintenant en m'adressant directement aux femmes de ce pays. Vous n'êtes la propriété de personne. Votre nom n'est pas une négociation. Votre survie n'est pas un secret de famille. Votre vie est la priorité absolue que ce Parlement doit protéger. Nous vous entendons. Nous vous voyons. Et nous ne nous arrêterons pas tant que la loi n'égalera pas le courage qu'il faut pour parler. Ce projet de loi est une fondation. Ce n'est pas une ligne d'arrivée.

Construisons-le ensemble. Construisons-le correctement. Finançons-le intégralement. Appliquons-le sans excuse. Parce que la justice ne peut pas attendre. La sécurité ne peut pas être reportée, Madame la présidente et les femmes de ce pays ne méritent rien de moins qu'une loi qui sauve réellement des vies.

J'en ai dit, Madame la présidente. Merci.

**Madam Speaker:** Je vous remercie.

Hon. Minister of Education and Human Resource!

(5.55 p.m.)

**The Minister of Education and Human Resource (Dr. M. Gungapersad):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. After listening to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think there are many Mauritians, men and women outside, listening to him, who must have said that their work has gone unnoticed. There are thousands of them and to begin with, let me start by commending the hon. DPM. Let me commend the hon. Attorney General for coming with this piece of legislation.

Let me commend one of my colleagues. For the past five years, when we were in the opposition, hon. Stéphanie Anquetil has been militating for the cause of women, for every woman who has been suffering out there. And like her, there are many others, including men, who have been militating, including you, and others. The Family Support Services, all those officers working there – *Brigade pour la protection de la famille*, NGOs which work relentlessly, Community Child Watch, the Parliamentary Gender Caucus, the Law Society, and we can go on and on. Sometimes, this is the problem in this country. Sometimes we do not see the essential.

Like in *Le Petit Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry has said –

« L'essentiel souvent est invisible aux yeux. On ne voit bien qu'avec le cœur »

Essayez de regarder l'honorable leader de l'opposition. Vous allez voir des Mauriciens, des Mauriciennes qui s'engagent au quotidien ; pas seulement à 2 heures du matin. 24/24 pour la protection des enfants, des hommes et des femmes. Ici, j'ai en tête, Madame la présidente...

**Madam Speaker:** Speak to me.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** J'ai en tête les policiers qui reçoivent souvent ces victimes. J'ai en tête ces hommes de loi. J'ai en tête ces médecins, ces nursing officers. Mais aujourd'hui, je vais prendre une perspective d'un enseignant parce que nous, les enseignants, les éducateurs, nous recevons dans nos établissements *broken kids, broken children who come from these homes where domestic abuse, domestic violence is practiced very often. For example, I can quote so many anecdotes.*

I have this little girl who is in Form two. And we always find a girl, her eyes are red, systematically red and I ask the form teacher to go and investigate why that girl's eyes are red. The form teacher met the girl and the girl said, "*Pane ariv nanyen monsieur*" – nothing has happened, Sir. I said, "Go and investigate, you are going to find something." He went, kept on asking, kept on asking, and here is the story.

When she was in Form one, one night, the drugged father comes home. He starts quarrelling with the mother and the mother at that time, was grinding red chillies in the kitchen. The father ill-treating, abusing the mother, telling the mother that that child is an illegitimate child. Out of frustration, out of anger, what does the mother do? She takes hold of all the crushed chilies and brushes them on the face of that child. That child, today, an adolescent; tomorrow, an adult, will grow with a pair of red eyes. This is domestic abuse. This is domestic violence. For us, it is not only a debate, hon. Leader of Opposition. *C'est du vécu.*

Thousands of teachers, rectors, headmasters there in schools, we receive in the morning children in tears, children who have not changed their clothes. Why? Sometimes, the father has expelled – let me use the word – expelled the mother and the kids from home. Where do they live the whole night? They look for a bus shelter. They spend the night there. In the morning, that child comes to your school, mocked by classmates, school friends because they do not know the suffering of those kids. Domestic Abuse Bill, I think it is still one step in the right direction to support children. We are talking about bullying. Where do kids learn?

Neurologically speaking, Madam Speaker, there is internalising and externalising behaviours and habits learned from our immediate surrounding. Children learn a lot from their immediate surrounding. And what happens? Michael Harrington, a great American sociologist, anthropologist, what does he say? We tend to replicate whatever we have lived. These kids, these men and women, these are the people we are trying to bring a ray of hope through this Bill. You can complain, hon. Leader of Opposition, it is coming too late. What did you do? That is the other question we have to ask you.

But, Madam Speaker, in Lower VI while studying literature, there is one sentence which got stuck on my mind. Jean Anouilh –

« *Il ne faut pas battre une femme, même avec une fleur.* »

I will change it –

« *Il ne faut pas battre un humain, même avec une fleur.* »

Because I am a Gandhian, the school where I was, deep within, this is the philosophy: ‘*Ahimsa.*’ I translate it: *Ahimsa* means non-violence. This non-violence is not only physical violence, and this is what we find in the Bill. We extend the definition of violence; physical, moral, sexual, whatever form of violence. Sometimes, the worst violence are the invisible wounds we inflict. Sometimes, a word, a comment may be more painful than other forms of violence.

Madam Speaker, in our society, unfortunately, the notion of love has to be reviewed sometimes. During the pandemic, in my constituency, when it was difficult to get food packs in Poudre d'Or village, me and my friends went and visited a lady to offer her the food pack. She showed us the multiple wounds on her legs, on her hands, and elsewhere, and we asked her this question: ‘*Kifer ou pa pe al stasion? Station pre.*’ – Why you are not going to the police station, which is very close? – The answer was: ‘*Mo kontan li tro bokou.*’ Very often, domestic abuse continues and is perpetuated for the wrong notion of love. This is not love. And where to start healing? Where to start that education? If it is not at home; it is at school.

But, Madam Speaker, let me tell you, not only students are victims of domestic abuse. Members of teaching and non-teaching staff are as well. We know how many of them sometimes are contemplating suicide out of despair. When we have children coming from backgrounds which are hostile, toxic, violent, aggressive, these children lose notion of love, affection, humanism, and sometimes, we do not understand them. It is important, we have that element of rehabilitation. It is important, and I commend the hon. Attorney General for

going in that direction. Unfortunately, no matter what we do, we do not live in an ideal world. No matter how much of talking we do, no matter how much of counselling we do, unfortunately, we are going to have men and women who are very far from understanding what is love and what is affection.

Today while listening to us, there are many in whose ears these words will echo. *C'est quoi une famille qui est protectrice, une famille qui nous protège ? Malheureusement, nous avons des femmes battues, nous avons des hommes battus, nous avons des enfants battus. Mais pas que battus, tués, malheureusement, dans cette société, une société civilisée, dites-vous bien, Madame la présidente. Comment peut-on tolérer cela ? Voilà, pourquoi,* I commend the courage of the DPM for coming, because each time when you talk, you are talking with your heart for the welfare of these kids. When we have domestic violence, it replicates in drug addiction sometimes, in alcoholism and other vices. Domestic violence seriously shakes the very foundation of an important institution called family.

Madam Speaker, children who live in a home, in a family where there is violence almost at any time suffer from mental health. Their academic performance is jeopardised. Then, people will come and ask: what have you done to ensure a rise in the rate of success? That is why I say often, I do not go by figures because sometimes, we have to understand the kids. We may provide the best teachers, the best schools, the best textbooks, but if the child is starving, is emotionally famished, the child is not going to perform.

May this Bill lead us in the future to find fewer, if not, no swollen eyes, broken jaws, broken ribs, deep wounds, fatal blows. *Il ne faut pas battre un humain, même avec une fleur. Tendons la main de l'espoir vers tous ceux qui sont aujourd'hui dans l'obscurité et dans le désespoir.* May this Bill when it becomes a law, implemented with a heart so that we save as many Mauritians as we can.

I am done, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you so much.

Yes, hon. Chief Whip!

(6.10 p.m.)

**Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) :** Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet, j'ai écouté l'honorable

leader de l'opposition avec beaucoup d'attention et je dois dire que j'ai été profondément choquée. Il défend aujourd'hui les femmes et les enfants, il n'est jamais trop tard. Merci, Monsieur l'honorable leader de l'opposition.

Je me souviens encore la période de 2019 à 2024. Je posais quatre questions parlementaires par séance à la ministre de la Femme d'alors sur les victimes de violence concernant les femmes et les enfants. Pendant que je posais les questions, Madame la présidente, la ministre d'alors ricanait, elle et les autres membres du MSM, incluant le président du MSM qui est, aujourd'hui, l'honorable leader de l'opposition. Et oui, quand je soulevais ces drames ! Madame la présidente, j'ai été expulsée de cette Assemblée lorsque je soulevais ces drames. On m'a expulsé de cette Assemblée ! Pas une fois, pas deux fois, trois fois, j'ai été expulsée de cette Assemblée et je dois vous dire, Madame la présidente, si c'était à refaire, je le ferai puisque mon combat est sincère et je tiens à le dire.

Madame la présidente, pour comprendre où nous allons avec ce nouveau *Domestic Abuse Bill* de 2026, il est de notre devoir de nous rappeler d'où nous venons. L'histoire législative de notre pays sur cette question n'est pas une simple succession de textes de loi, c'est l'histoire d'une longue, douloureuse et difficile conquête pour la dignité humaine.

Souvenons-nous de l'île Maurice d'avant 1997, avant cette date charnière, la violence au sein du foyer n'avait pas de nom dans nos codes. Elle était tristement reléguée au simple rang de fait divers, étouffée sous l'expression lâche de : dispute de couple, ou dans un registre plus mauricien, « *diskision ant mari fam* ». Pendant qu'on détournait le regard, des femmes payaient le prix fort. Madame la présidente, combien de femmes ont perdu la vie dans le silence, dans l'indifférence générale et dans la détresse de la dépression ?

Madame la présidente, combien de nos sœurs, de nos mères, de nos filles sont mortes sous les coups de leur conjoint ? Combien ? Combien de familles mauriciennes ont été profondément fragilisées ? Nous ne parlons pas de statistiques, Madame la présidente, nous parlons de vies humaines. Nous parlons de visages tuméfiés. Nous parlons des yeux au beurre noir. Nous parlons de mâchoires brisées, de mâchoires fracassées. Plus insoutenable encore, nous parlons de ces femmes enceintes portant la vie qui recevaient des coups de pied d'une violence inouïe en plein ventre. Voilà, la réalité barbare à laquelle notre société fermait les yeux.

En 1997, il a fallu un courage politique immense pour briser cette omerta portée par un gouvernement Travailleste-MMM sous la direction du Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, faisant de Maurice un pays pionnier dans la région en matière de protection juridique des victimes. C'est la ministre de la Femme et du développement de la famille d'alors, Madame Indira Thacoor-Sidaya, qui a bravé les tabous, les moqueries, les préjugés et les résistances d'une société patriarcale pour présenter devant cette auguste Assemblée, c'était le 29 avril 1997, la toute première loi cadre de notre histoire, la *Protection from Domestic Violence Act* de 1997.

C'est cette loi qui la première brisa le silence. Madame la présidente, les débats furent passionnés, ceux qui étaient présents en 1997 le savent, dans cet hémicycle. Car certains craignaient encore que l'État ne s'immisce dans la sphère privée de la famille. Mais ce jour-là, l'État mauricien franchit enfin le seuil des foyers pour dire ce qui se passe derrière les portes closes n'est plus une affaire privée, c'est un crime.

Madame la présidente, il convient de rappeler que les conclusions de la quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes, tenue à Beijing en 1995, ont identifié la violence à l'égard des femmes comme l'un des 12 domaines critiques exigeant une action prioritaire de la communauté internationale.

Mais une loi pionnière doit respirer au rythme des réalités de son époque. Depuis ce texte fondateur de 1997, la loi a été amendée à quatre reprises comme l'a si bien dit l'adjointe au Premier ministre. Elle a été amendée en 2004, en 2007, en 2011, en 2016, quatre étapes majeures qui racontent l'évolution de notre prise de conscience nationale. En 2004 et 2007, nous avons élargi la protection à toutes les personnes vivant sous le même toit et alourdi les peines pour non-respect des ordres de la cour. En 2011, nous avons introduit l'obligation de réhabilitation pour les agresseurs, comprenant que punir ne suffit pas, qu'il s'agit de guérir les traumatismes d'une société. En 2016, enfin, nous avons redéfini le harcèlement, la traque et renforcer le pouvoir de nos officiers sur le terrain.

Madame la présidente, si cette loi a dû être amendée à quatre reprises, c'est parce que la violence, elle aussi, change de visage. Elle mute, elle se fait plus sournoise, la violence. Elle s'immisce dans le contrôle économique, dans le harcèlement psychologique, et tragiquement, dans l'intimité non consentie.

Aujourd'hui, chers collègues, 29 ans après, à travers le *Domestic Abuse Bill* de 2026, porté par l'adjointe au Premier ministre, l'honorable Madame Ariane Navarre-Marie, nous honorons les souffrances, nous honorons les sacrifices et l'héritage de 1997 en lui donnant les outils et les moyens de notre époque.

C'est précisément parce que nous mesurons la gravité de cet héritage historique, Madame la présidente, que nous devons examiner le texte de 2026 avec la plus grande rigueur. L'hommage que nous devons aux victimes du passé, c'est l'exigence absolue sur les textes de l'avenir. Dans ce contexte, je me réjouis de la présentation en première lecture, cet après-midi, du *Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill* par l'Attorney General, l'honorable Gavin Glover. En inscrivant enfin dans notre droit pénal les crimes de féminicide et de viol conjugal à travers le *Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill*, déjà présenté en première lecture cet après-midi et qui sera prochainement débattu dans cette Assemblée, l'honorable Attorney General poursuit une réforme essentielle et courageuse de notre arsenal juridique.

Madame la présidente, regardons donc ce projet de loi en face. En 1997, nous combattions la violence physique visible. En 2026, nous faisons face à ce monstre qui a muté et ce texte a l'immense mérite de s'attaquer aux nouvelles formes de barbarie moderne. Je salue l'introduction du concept de contrôle coercitif, cette prison invisible sans barreaux où l'agresseur isole et terrorise. Je salue la reconnaissance du *cyber-abuse*, ce harcèlement numérique qui poursuit les victimes jusque sur leur écran. Je salue l'incrimination de l'abus économique, car priver une personne de ses moyens financiers, c'est l'enchaîner au silence. Je salue également l'introduction de l'ordonnance d'exclusion, *exclusion order*, qui constitue une avancée majeure pour permettre à la victime à l'abri sans qu'elle n'ait à fuir son propre toit.

Plus encore, ce projet de loi regarde enfin nos enfants, non plus comme de simples témoins oubliés, mais comme des co-victimes de ces tragédies. C'est une avancée humaine et juridique majeure.

L'élimination du pardon automatique, le fait que la police doive obligatoirement référer l'affaire au DPP, même si la victime retire sa plainte sous la pression, montre que l'État assure enfin pleinement son rôle de bouclier.

De même, voir la justice dotée de dents avec jusqu'à 10 ans de servitude pénale pour les récidivistes envoie un message clair. Madame la présidente, un texte de loi est important, mais la mise en application du texte l'est encore plus. À cet effet, permettez-moi que j'apporte

mon humble contribution au débat. À la page 4 du texte de loi se trouve une définition de la relation adulte interdépendante. Je comprends que le texte veut légitimement protéger les personnes vulnérables, âgées ou handicapées, hors du cadre du mariage ou du concubinage. C'est noble. Mais à qui incombera la charge de prouver une interdépendance économique et émotionnelle, substantielle ? Cela ne risque-t-il pas de transformer le parcours de la victime en un calvaire juridique ?

Plus loin, à l'article 5, page 12, *Reporting Acts of Domestic Abuse*. Le montant dérisoire de l'amende pour non-assistance, fixer une amende maximale de R 50 000 pour un professionnel de la santé ou du social qui choisit de fermer les yeux sur le calvaire d'une victime, pour moi, je le dis bien, pour moi, c'est inacceptable. Face à une vie humaine brisée, la complicité par le silence doit être punie au même titre que le crime de non-assistance à personne en danger. À la page 22 sur la composition du *coordinating panel*, le paragraphe 1 indique que ce panel est composé exclusivement de techniciens, excluant toute représentation des travailleurs sociaux et des ONG. Or, ce sont précisément ces acteurs de terrain en contact direct avec les victimes qui détiennent l'expertise concrète. En les écartant, on prive le dispositif d'une voix indispensable.

De plus, le paragraphe 7 stipule que le panel se réunira *as often as is necessary but at least twice a year*. Madame la présidente, le risque est grand qu'en pratique. L'expression au moins deux fois par an devienne un plancher administratif rigide plutôt qu'un minimum opérationnel dynamique face aux urgences.

Madame la présidente, l'article 28 est consacré au devoir des *enforcement officers*. C'est la question cruciale des moyens matériels et humains. La loi exige des visites à domicile et des revues périodiques tous les 3 mois pour chaque agresseur sous ordre de protection. C'est une excellente idée. Et je souhaite que le recrutement d'un nombre nécessaire d'officiers, adéquatement qualifiés, se fasse en priorité avant de rendre effectif cette provision au vu des milliers de cas répertoriés sur le terrain. Sans un budget massif alloué à cette ambition, cette loi restera une promesse de papier.

Madame la présidente, j'observe que l'article 32, « *Proceeding in Camera Or Remote* », prévoit que seules les demandes d'ordonnance de protection relevant du *Domestic Abuse Act*, seront entendues à huit clos ou à distance. En revanche, cette disposition ne semble pas s'étendre aux procédures pénales pour violence domestique. Selon l'article 40, le

texte prévoit que dans des cas exceptionnels, un magistrat peut envoyer l'agresseur en thérapie au lieu de lui infliger de la prison ou une amende.

Madame la présidente, quels sont les critères exceptionnels et qui les déterminera ? Le suivi psychologique ne doit jamais devenir une porte de sortie facile pour éviter le casier judiciaire. La thérapie doit être un complément à la peine mais pas un substitut à la justice.

Madame la présidente, avant de conclure, permettez-moi de faire quelques remarques d'ordre général. Il est impératif de durcir les sanctions applicables aux fausses déclarations. Nous devons punir sévèrement ceux qui déposent des déclarations écrites malveillantes. Ces fausses allégations doivent faire l'objet d'une enquête diligente car elles sont trop souvent utilisées pour instrumentaliser la justice et priver l'autre parent de son droit d'accès aux enfants.

Les affaires relevant du *Domestic Violence Act* sont actuellement entendues à partir de 13h30 dans les tribunaux de district. Je souhaite insister sur un point fondamental. Une femme déjà traumatisée ne devrait pas être contrainte de passer des heures entières dans les couloirs d'un tribunal à attendre son audience, au milieu du public après avoir dû s'absenter de son travail. Notre système judiciaire doit garantir un environnement d'audience digne, sécurisé et profondément humain. Lorsqu'une affaire nécessite un procès complet qui s'étend trop souvent sur une ou deux années en raison des renvois successifs, je propose la désignation dans chaque tribunal de district, d'un magistrat spécifiquement affecté aux affaires de violence domestique afin que ces dossiers soient appelés dès le matin et traités en priorité.

Plus fondamentalement encore, la violence domestique ne peut continuer à être diluée dans le fonctionnement ordinaire de la justice. Elle doit être traitée comme une priorité nationale. C'est pourquoi je propose la création d'une cour spécialisée, exclusivement dédiée à ces affaires.

Pour conclure, Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de porter à l'attention de cette Chambre une comparaison qui mérite notre réflexion à tous ici présents. Sommes-nous conscients – je vous pose une question – sommes-nous conscients qu'en matière de justice pénale, une personne qui commet un vol, par exemple le vol d'une poule ou d'un objet de faible valeur, cette personne est rapidement traduite en cours, rapidement jugée et rapidement condamnée dans des délais très courts. Or, dans le même temps, les affaires de violence domestique qui touchent pourtant la dignité humaine et à l'intégrité des victimes prennent des

années avant d'aboutir avec un nombre de condamnations encore largement insuffisant. Il existe malheureusement un déséquilibre préoccupant que nous devons collectivement corriger.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui en 2026, soit 29 ans après les premières fondations de 1997, avec le gouvernement de l'Alliance du Changement, nous sommes prêts à bâtir un édifice juridique moderne et inviolable. Mais assurons-nous que les fondations soient solides, que les budgets suivent les textes et qu'aucune faille ne vienne trahir la mémoire de ces trois femmes tombées sous les coups de leur conjoint depuis le début de l'année.

Donnons à cette loi les moyens de ses ambitions pour qu'enfin la peur change de camp. Ce qui est en jeu ici, chers collègues, ce sont des vies humaines, la dignité des femmes, d'hommes et d'enfants qui attendent de l'État une protection réelle, rapide et efficace. Notre devoir, à la fois moral et politique, est de faire en sorte que chaque victime puisse bénéficier d'une protection accessible, effective et immédiate. Et c'est dans cet esprit que je porte mon plein soutien à ce projet de loi tout en appelant à une mise en œuvre rigoureuse, cohérente et résolument centrée sur les victimes.

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

**Madam Speaker:** Je vous en prie. L'honorable député de Rodrigues, M. Edouard.

(6.30 p.m.)

**Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues):** Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor to talk about this very important Bill.

**Madam Speaker:** Speak up.

**Mr Edouard:** Madame la présidente, vous m'excuserez. Vous me pardonnerez si je tremble parce qu'il fait si froid de ce côté de la Chambre cet après-midi.

Madame la présidente, ce texte législatif marque un tournant décisif et tant avant-gardiste dans l'histoire de notre République. Pendant des décennies, notre cadre juridique a traité la violence domestique comme une simple affaire privée et physique. Aujourd'hui, nous mettons enfin cette crise en pleine lumière en la reconnaissant pour ce qu'elle est réellement : une violation systémique des droits humains et un frein majeur à notre développement.

Madame la présidente, je m'adresse à cette Chambre non seulement en tant que législateur, mais avec la double responsabilité qui est la mienne, celle de député de l'île Rodrigues, portant la voix de nos concitoyens insulaires et celle de membre activement

engagé au sein des instances de la SADC. C'est sous ce prisme à la fois ultra-local et résolument régional que je souhaite analyser ce texte.

Ce projet de loi ne se contente pas de modifier d'anciennes dispositions. Il démantèle complètement l'ancienne loi obsolète de 1997, *Protection from Domestic Violence Act*. Il la remplace par un mécanisme moderne, adapté au traumatisme, conçu pour protéger les plus vulnérables et punir les coupables avec toute la rigueur de la loi. En faisant cela, il aligne enfin la République de Maurice sur le protocole de la SADC sur le genre et le développement, comblant des lacunes qui n'ont que trop duré.

Madame la présidente, l'architecture législative et l'alignement avec la SADC. Examinons comment ce projet de loi reflète les mandats fondamentaux de la SADC. Premièrement, l'élargissement de la définition de la violence. L'article 20 du protocole de la SADC impose aux États membres d'adopter des lois interdisant toutes les formes de violence sexiste, y compris les préjudices physiques, sexuels, psychologiques et économiques.

Historiquement, nos tribunaux ont eu du mal à poursuivre le contrôle non physique. Ce projet de loi change complètement la donne. En criminalisant explicitement le contrôle coercitif, la violence psychologique et le sabotage économique, nous répondons directement au mandat de la SADC. Nous reconnaissons qu'un partenaire qui contrôle chaque roupie et qui isole une victime de sa famille commet un acte de violence tout aussi destructeur qu'un coup physique.

Deuxièmement, l'harmonisation avec le Code pénal concernant les violences sexuelles et mortelles. L'article 21 du protocole de la SADC exige que les États membres criminalisent le viol conjugal et éradiquent les immunités juridiques profondément enracinées. Ce projet de loi, parallèlement aux amendements pénaux qui l'accompagnent, abolit définitivement cette immunité. Le viol conjugal est un viol, purement et simplement. De plus, en codifiant le féminicide comme une infraction spécifique et aggravée dans le Code pénal, Maurice s'aligne sur la directive régionale urgente de la SADC visant à éliminer les homicides fondés sur le genre.

Madame la présidente, le coût économique de la violence et la réalité rodriguaise. La violence domestique n'est pas qu'un drame intime. C'est un gouffre financier pour notre économie. Les études du Secrétariat de la SADC et du PNUD démontrent que la violence basée sur le genre coûte en moyenne entre 1 % et 2 % du PIB aux pays de l'Afrique australe.

Pour notre République, le coût direct et indirect avoisine les 0,6 % de notre PIB. Nous parlons de milliards de roupies qui s'envolent chaque année en soins de santé, en frais judiciaires et en perte de productivité. L'article 15 du protocole de la SADC exige l'autonomisation économique des femmes. Or, comment réaliser cette autonomie quand la violence détruit la force de travail de la moitié de notre population ? En tant que député de Rodrigues, je refuse que l'on ignore l'impact démultiplié de ce coût sur notre communauté insulaire.

L'effondrement de la productivité locale. À Rodrigues, où le tissu économique est plus fragile, lorsqu'une femme est victime de violence, c'est toute la microéconomie locale qui vacille. Qu'elle soit agricultrice, artisane ou employée dans l'administration, l'absentéisme lié au traumatisme se traduit par une perte de revenus immédiate pour sa famille.

Le fardeau du silence. Les rapports d'ONG comme *Gender Links* révèlent que moins de 1 % des victimes osent porter plainte à Rodrigues par peur de la stigmatisation sociale dans de petites communautés. Ce silence forcé pousse des mères de famille à fuir leur foyer sans aucune ressource, plongeant leurs enfants dans une trappe à pauvreté que l'Assemblée régionale doit ensuite subventionner par des aides sociales.

Le coût de l'insularité pour les soins. L'absence d'infrastructures médicales hyperspécialisées ou de centres de prise en charge psychologique à long terme à Rodrigues nécessite parfois des transferts lourds et coûteux vers l'île principale, un fardeau financier insoutenable pour les familles et l'État.

Madame la présidente, les défis de la mise en œuvre à Rodrigues. Une loi ne vaut que par son application sur l'ensemble du territoire de la République. L'article 25 du protocole de la SADC exige que les États membres offrent aux victimes des recours juridiques accessibles, rapides et efficaces. L'introduction de la compétence universelle dans ce projet de loi de 2026 est une révolution pour Rodrigues.

Une victime fuyant un environnement toxique à Port Mathurin ou dans les hauts de Saint-Gabriel n'aura plus à subir la pression de son village. Elle peut désormais pousser la porte de n'importe quel poste de police de l'île pour être protégée immédiatement. Dans ce contexte, peut-être faudrait-il le préciser dans la section 2 en remplaçant *Mauritius* par *Republic of Mauritius*, et aussi d'ajouter *Commission concerned of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly* là où est mentionné *Ministry* dans ce projet de loi.

Deux défis majeurs se dressent devant nous à Rodrigues. L'insuffisance criante des infrastructures. Le projet de loi donne la priorité aux ordonnances de résidence, *occupation orders*, forçant l'agresseur à quitter le domicile. Mais en cas d'urgence absolue, où vont les victimes ? À Maurice, il existe un réseau de bureaux de soutien familial. À Rodrigues, l'essentiel de la réponse repose sur l'unique *Integrated Family Centre* de Malabar, géré par l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues. Rodrigues souffre d'un manque cruel de refuges d'État sécurisés et anonymes.

La spécificité de la formation policière locale. Nous ne pouvons pas calquer la formation des forces de l'ordre sur un modèle purement mauricien. Les officiers de la *Family Protection Unit* basée à Rodrigues font face à des dynamiques familiales de très grande proximité géographique. Ils doivent impérativement recevoir une formation intensive, continue et spécifique aux approches sensibles au traumatisme en milieu insulaire clos. Si une victime se heurte au scepticisme ou au jugement à l'accueil d'un poste de police rodriguais, tout ce cadre législatif s'effondrera.

Madame la présidente, appel à l'action et mécanisme financier. Pour que cette loi ne soit pas une législation purement port-louisienne, nous devons y associer les moyens de nos ambitions. L'inaction nous coûte plus cher que l'action. Financer les délais judiciaires de trois jours et créer des refuges à Rodrigues n'est pas une dépense budgétaire. C'est un investissement économique vital.

Je demande solennellement au gouvernement d'étudier la possibilité d'allouer un budget décentralisé spécifique à l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues pour l'application de cette loi de 2026. De solliciter activement les mécanismes de financement spéciaux de la SADC et les fonds de coopération régionale dédiés à l'alignement des centres d'accueil d'urgence et de transition à Rodrigues – pour cofinancer la construction de nouveaux centres d'accueil d'urgence et de transition à Rodrigues. De veiller à ce que le nouveau *Domestic Abuse Coordinating Panel* intègre un représentant officiel de Rodrigues pour s'assurer que les programmes de réhabilitation obligatoire des agresseurs soient adaptés à la réalité de notre île.

En conclusion, Madame la présidente, en votant cette loi, la République de Maurice prouve à ses partenaires régionaux, et plus encore, à ses propres citoyens, qu'elle ne tolérera plus la terreur domestique. Nous ne pourrions être véritablement fiers de cette loi que si

chaque femme, qu'elle vive à Port Louis, à Curepipe ou au fond des vallées de Rodrigues, se sente pleinement protégée et économiquement soutenue sous le drapeau de notre République.

Je recommande ce projet de loi à la Chambre et j'exhorte tous les honorables membres de tous les côtés de cet hémicycle à lui apporter leur soutien total, unanime et indéfectible.

Madame la présidente, je vous remercie.

**Madam Speaker:** Merci. Hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

(6.43 p.m.)

**Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal):** Madame la présidente, au mois de mars, notre pays a fait honneur à Nathacha Appanah. Fille du sol, la romancière a reçu l'une de nos plus hautes distinctions, le grade de *Grand Officer of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean* pour son œuvre qui aujourd'hui, porte Maurice au sommet des lettres francophones.

« La nuit au cœur », prix Femina, prix Goncourt des lycéens, est un témoignage bouleversant sur le féminicide et la violence contre les femmes. Il est basé sur des faits réels, survenus notamment à Maurice. Permettez-moi de poser d'emblée une question : Avons-nous décerné cette décoration pour notre propre satisfaction ? Pour une opération de com', pour le prestige d'une mauricienne célébrée à Paris ? Ou l'avons-nous fait parce que nous croyons vraiment à ce que ce livre nous crie ? Je ne tranche pas encore. Je dis seulement ceci – Ce qui compte, ce n'est pas tant la décoration que ce qu'on fait ensuite du message qu'on a dit honorer.

C'est le même enjeu, aujourd'hui, pour un texte de loi qui lui aussi souhaite honorer la cause des femmes. Je dis les femmes car elles sont les victimes dans près de neuf cas sur 10 de violence domestique et c'est sous cet angle que j'aborderai le *Domestic Abuse Bill*. Je veux lui appliquer la même épreuve de vérité. Derrière les intentions, quelle réalité pour les femmes ? Quand ce texte fait bien, je dirais sans détour, car il fait de bonnes choses et il faut commencer par là.

Le premier mérite de ce *Bill* est dans les mots qu'il ose. Notre loi déjà ne limitait pas l'abus au coup. Elle parlait d'intimidation, de harcèlement, de privation, mais elle le disait

dans des termes assez vagues pour qu'on puisse en pratique les contourner ou faire mine de les ignorer.

Ce projet de loi, lui, est précis. Il décrit les mécanismes de l'emprise. Il décrit la violence économique. Il décrit la violence psychologique. Il décrit précisément ce qu'est le contrôle d'une vie. Désormais, une femme dont le compagnon confisque chaque roupie de son salaire est une victime clairement nommée comme telle. Il faut mesurer ce que cela change. Car ce qui est écrit en toute lettre dans une loi devient beaucoup plus difficile à balayer d'un revers de main.

La loi actuelle n'ignorait pas ces questions, mais à la station de police, trop souvent, on la réduisait à ce qui se voyait – *ou pena mark lor ou lekor, pa pou kapav gagn Form 58*, pas de *statement* non plus. En nommant l'invisible, ce texte enlève toute excuse à l'indifférence et pour cela, je le salue franchement.

Son deuxième mérite est de regarder enfin la vie des victimes telle qu'elle est. La loi actuelle pense d'abord au couple marié ou vivant sous un même toit. La nouvelle définition de « *related person* » élargit la protection à ceux et celles que l'on oubliait. La compagne qui a déménagé, la fiancée, l'ex-partenaire que l'on harcèle longtemps après la rupture, la ou le compagnon homosexuel.

Il reconnaît les liens de dépendance où une personne âgée vulnérable se trouve à la merci de qui la soigne. C'est bien que l'on protège la victime pour ce qu'elle subit et non pour l'étiquette de sa relation. Mais voici déjà le réel, détailler l'emprise dans une loi est une chose, la faire reconnaître par l'officier de service un samedi soir au poste de police en est une autre. Nous y reviendrons puisqu'elle est là toute la question. Nulle part cette question n'est plus brûlante que sur les *protection orders*.

Depuis des années, les mauriciennes peuvent obtenir un *protection order*. Sur le papier, elles sont protégées. Sur le papier. Or, dans cette Assemblée même, le 14 avril, nous avons entendu ce que vaut ce papier. Sur les 10 femmes tuées par leur conjoint dans notre pays depuis janvier 2025, sept détenaient un *protection order*. Ce chiffre a été confirmé ici même par l'honorable ministre et arrêtons-nous dessus un instant. Ces femmes avaient alerté les autorités. Elles avaient signalé les harcèlements, les coups, les menaces. Elles avaient fait tout

ce qu'on leur demandait de faire. Elles tenaient dans leurs mains le papier censé les garder en vie et pourtant elles ont été tuées.

Interrogé sur ces *protection orders* qui ne protègent pas, l'honorable ministre nous a répondu que les femmes les retirent, que l'on ne peut forcer personne. C'est vrai. Mais comprenons bien ce que veut dire retirer sa plainte. Une femme ne retire pas *un protection order* par caprice. Elle le retire sous l'emprise. Elle le retire parce qu'elle dépend pour nourrir ses enfants et payer son loyer de l'homme qu'elle accuse. Elle le retire par peur, elle le retire parce que quelque part sur son chemin, on l'a déjà renvoyé chez elle. Faire peser sur la victime la responsabilité de ce retrait, c'est demander à celle qui se noie pourquoi elle n'a pas mieux nagé.

Et il y a pire encore. Les affaires traînent. Elles traînent tellement que *l'interim order* lui-même expire avant que justice ne soit rendue. Deux ans passent, le *protection order* tombe, le dossier s'éteint sans jugement, sans remède et la lenteur, ici, peut être fatale.

Et puis, il y a ce que la loi permet déjà et que l'on n'accorde presque jamais. Depuis longtemps, le magistrat peut ordonner que ce soit l'agresseur qui quitte le domicile avec *l'occupation order*. En 2024, sur 398 *protection orders*, un seul *occupation order* a été accordé. En 2023, zéro sur 376. Pour cette année, vendredi dernier au *Committee of Supply*, l'honorable ministre nous a indiqué qu'elle allait circuler les chiffres des *occupation order* émis pour la dernière année, mais nous attendons toujours. Mais à la lumière des chiffres que nous avons déjà, autrement dit, dans notre pays, c'est encore presque toujours la femme qui fait sa valise et l'homme qui reste dans la maison.

Alors ce *Bill* répond-t-il à tout cela ? En partie, oui. Et sur le dernier point, il traite la question de la résidence avec un nouveau *exclusion order*, donc il reconnaît ce problème et tente d'y répondre.

C'est positif. Mais un ordre qui n'est pas applicable, c'est une promesse non tenue. La France l'a compris, le Royaume-Uni l'a compris. Il surveille l'agresseur par un bracelet électronique antirapprochement. Ce *Bill* lui ne le prévoit pas. On peut aisément comprendre que c'est une mesure qui serait coûteuse. Mais c'est surtout une question de priorité politique parce qu'en fin de compte, Madame la présidente, la vie d'une femme a-t-elle un coût ? Le véritable obstacle n'est pas dans les textes. Il est dans les têtes car les bouts de papier ne sont

rien si les approches ne suivent pas. Nous l'avons lu, avoué publiquement par la police elle-même. Elle essaie parfois de jouer, je cite –

« La carte de la médiation pour préserver la cellule familiale ».

Pesons cette phrase. Préserver la cellule familiale avant la sécurité de la femme. Réconcilier, c'est la remettre encore une fois en face de lui. Et il faut dire pourquoi dans ces affaires-là, la médiation est un danger. La médiation suppose deux parties égales, assises à la même table, libre de négocier. Mais entre une femme sous emprise et l'homme qui la terrifie, il n'y a pas de partie égale. Il y a celle qui a peur et celui qu'elle craint. Lui demander de trouver un terrain d'entente, c'est lui demander de négocier sa propre sécurité avec son bourreau. C'est trop souvent la renvoyer chez elle avec une promesse de plus. Le reste du monde l'a compris et l'a gravé dans le marbre. La Convention d'Istanbul oblige les États européens qui la ratifient à proscrire toute médiation imposée dans les cas de violence domestique. La France, en 2020, est allée jusqu'à interdire par la loi, la médiation dans ces affaires de violence domestique.

Le Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes, le CEDAW en anglais, a rappelé à Maurice qu'en aucune circonstance, ces dossiers ne doivent être renvoyés vers la conciliation. Le rapport présenté par Maurice à la CEDAW reconnaît lui-même que nous n'y sommes pas encore. Et sur ce point précis, ce *Bill* ne dit rien. Et c'est bien dommage.

Madame la présidente, que dire de l'esprit général du projet de loi ? Dans son architecture, il est moderne. Il met en place une coordination entre les services, un panel, des comités. L'idée est juste. Aucune institution ne doit agir en isolation. Il pose des principes clairs. Il place l'intérêt de la victime au centre, tourne le regard vers la réhabilitation de l'agresseur et pas seulement vers la punition. Ce sont des bonnes fondations.

Cependant, une loi, même bien faite, ne peut pas tout garantir. Elle ne peut pas à elle seule, bâtir les refuges, financer les services, recruter, former les officiers. Oui, parce qu'un autre grand défi est celui de la formation. Le suivi, nous dit-on, reposera sur les *enforcement officers*. Seront-ils assez nombreux ? Assez formés ? C'est la formation qui peut changer le réflexe du policier qui à 11h du soir, dit à la femme, "*zafer menaz, nou pa pou rentre ladan, madam*". C'est la formation qui peut changer ces réflexes. C'est donc au gouvernement d'accompagner ce texte d'action et de moyens. Et c'est précisément là qu'est le risque. Car un texte que la volonté politique abandonne une fois les applaudissements éteints, ce texte-là ne

protège pas. Il rassure ceux qui l'ont voté et il laisse seule, celle qu'il est supposé défendre et protéger. Je ne dis pas cela pour condamner d'avance.

Je le dis pour qu'on ne se contente pas cette fois d'avoir juste bien écrit. Il faudra aller jusqu'au bout. Et si nous voulons aller jusqu'au bout, élevons le regard. Le féminicide ne tombe pas du ciel. C'est un résultat extrême, d'un mal qui ronge notre société. Ce mal comprend tout ce que nous tolérons trop souvent – le harcèlement dans la rue, la remarque sexiste qui fait sourire les collègues, la promotion qui échappe toujours à la femme. Et tous ces petits gestes que nous avons cessé de voir tant nous y sommes habitués. Une société qui s'accommode de la petite violence prépare, sans le vouloir, le terrain de la grande. On ne tue pas une femme du jour au lendemain. On l'a, avant, 1000 fois diminuée.

Ce mal a un nom, Madame la présidente. Il s'appelle le patriarcat. Et je sais que ce mot ici fera lever les yeux au ciel. On me dira qu'il est une idée importée, un mot de salon, une lubie venue d'ailleurs qui n'aurait rien à voir avec la réalité mauricienne. On me dira que chez nous, la femme est respectée, qu'elle est le pilier du foyer, que la loi garantit l'égalité, que nous avons une femme DPM, que nous avons une femme à la tête de l'État. Tout cela est vrai mais un peu court. Car admettre le patriarcat, ce n'est pas dire que chaque mari est un bourreau, ni que chaque père veut du mal à sa fille. Non, ce serait faux et profondément injuste.

Le patriarcat, c'est autre chose, de plus discret, de plus tenace. C'est l'ensemble des habitudes que nous avons reçu en héritage qui assoit la domination des hommes sur les femmes et que nous transmettons à nos enfants sans même nous en apercevoir. C'est la petite fille à qui l'on apprend à se taire pour ne pas faire d'histoire, quand on apprend à son frère à élever la voix, à parler fort. C'est la femme giflée à qui l'on demande qu'est-ce qu'elle a pu bien faire pour le provoquer. C'est la femme violée à qui l'on reproche d'avoir mis une jupe trop courte. C'est à elle de s'habiller pour ne pas tenter. C'est *ki dimunn pu dir* qui pèse sur ses épaules à elle, la honte, toujours dans son camp. C'est comment on apprend à nos fils qu'un homme doit toujours s'imposer. Le patriarcat, c'est comment certains finissent par se dire que leurs femmes sont leur propriété. Voilà le patriarcat.

Et ce n'est pas une abstraction. C'est une réalité que des femmes tous les ans paient de leur vie à Maurice. Aucun article de loi ne déracinera ce réflexe si nous refusons d'abord de le regarder en face, de le nommer et puis de le combattre. Voilà le féminisme. Alors faisons notre travail. Votons aujourd'hui ce texte de loi. Et dès demain, travaillons pour combler les

failles de notre système. Le bracelet électronique ou plus généralement le monitoring effectif des *protection orders*, l'interdiction de la médiation dans les affaires de violence domestique, les moyens réels pour la justice, la police, les fonctionnaires, la formation de ces officiers, une éducation revue en profondeur pour nos enfants et une exemplarité sans faille de ceux qui détiennent l'autorité.

Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de conclure avec ces mots toujours de Nathacha Appanah, pour Emma, sa cousine, l'une des femmes assassinées dans 'La nuit au cœur', fauchée par son mari à l'aube, abandonnée dans un fossé au pied du Corps de Garde –

« Je cherche désespérément dans ce matin d'été, dans ce dimanche naissant, dans tous les mots qui existent sur terre, je cherche un baume, une beauté, une douceur, une délicatesse, une caresse, un chant pour t'accompagner Emma, pour que tu sois moins seule désormais. »

Madame la présidente, faisons en sorte que les femmes de notre pays ne soient plus jamais seules. Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

**Madam Speaker:** Merci beaucoup.

Hon. Member from Rodrigues, Ms Collet.

(7.00 p.m.)

**Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues):** Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, chers collègues, aujourd'hui nous parlons d'une réalité douloureuse. Elle touche nos foyers, elle touche nos familles, et les statistiques parlent d'elles-mêmes : 3,000, 6,000, 7,000. Un cas de plus est un cas de trop. Des femmes, des hommes, des enfants vulnérables qui subissent des abus qui détruisent leur dignité, qui détruisent leur sécurité, qui brisent leurs rêves et leur enlèvent leur vie, et d'ailleurs, nous présentons nos plus vives condoléances à toutes les familles qui ont perdu un proche à travers des abus. Et c'est là que commence notre responsabilité collective.

Qui est la personne vulnérable dans notre communauté à chacun ? Posons-nous chacun la question. Une femme isolée ? Un enfant silencieux ? Un voisin âgé, traumatisé ? Un jeune en détresse ? Notre responsabilité est d'agir maintenant. Trop souvent, certains sont spectateurs passifs. Ils filment, partagent, commentent, sans égard aux conséquences pour ces personnes vulnérables et les auteurs des abus ou même de leurs familles. Mais nous devons

choisir la vigilance ; nous devons choisir la solidarité et la bienveillance, Madame la présidente, et cette solidarité doit s'accompagner d'un cadre légal fort. Un cadre attendu depuis bien des années.

Le programme gouvernemental 2024-2029 s'est engagé à moderniser nos lois, à renforcer nos structures. Ce projet de loi du jour en est la traduction concrète. La souffrance des victimes exige des réponses claires, pas des polémiques, pas de jugement sans comprendre les réalités. Le jugement ferme les portes. Nous, nous sommes ici pour faire la loi. Nous façonnons les normes, et nous devons financer l'application de ces lois, budgétiser pour la justice, pas pour le symbolisme. Et dans ce cadre, il faut bouger à l'ère de notre temps. Les violences domestiques ne se limitent plus aux coups physiques, Madame la présidente. Elles se déplacent dans l'espace virtuel.

Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de me concentrer un moment sur les abus numériques ; insultes en ligne, harcèlement par message, appels incessants, vidéo fabriquée pour humilier, image intime générée par intelligence artificielle. Nous devons reconnaître les comportements agressifs en ligne. Ils ciblent les victimes, ils ciblent les auteurs en réhabilitation, ils ciblent leurs familles déjà dévastées, et ces attaques aggravent la souffrance des familles. Elles doivent être sanctionnées. Ces abus laissent des cicatrices invisibles, mais profondes, entraînant des maladies mentales souvent sévères et irréversibles chez les victimes. La section 2(f) du projet de loi est claire. Elle étend la définition d'un acte d'abus domestique aux conduites perpétrées virtuellement par des moyens numériques ou électroniques, y compris les services de télécommunication. Maurice reconnaît désormais le cyber-abus domestique comme une forme émergente de violence basée sur le genre, en cohérence avec le *SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence*. Et d'ailleurs, je fais partie et je m'engage dans deux organes de la *SADC Parliamentary Forum* et on milite pour cette cause, Madame la présidente.

Le texte prévoit des ordonnances de protection contre ces abus, délivrées dans un délai réduit de 7 jours au lieu de 14, et peut-être à l'avenir, je le dis, mais je ne le dis pas, des ordonnances de protection électronique, pourquoi pas ? Pour répondre aux nouvelles formes d'abus ! Ce combat du jour engage toute la société ; notre Assemblée, la force policière, la justice, la santé, la sécurité sociale, les ONG, les comités villageois. Et d'ailleurs, nous reconnaissons leur contribution déjà dans ce combat. Mais là, il faut une coordination renforcée, une coordination sincère de toutes ces institutions. Et c'est aussi la responsabilité

des éducateurs de percevoir les signes d'enfants abusés, y compris dans leur vie numérique, Madame la présidente.

Ce projet de loi devrait aussi engager la presse, informer avec responsabilité, protéger l'intégrité des familles. Donner une voix aux victimes, oui, mais sans sensationnalisme, préserver la confidentialité des procédures en cours, et cette responsabilité est encore plus urgente à Rodrigues, où tout le monde connaît tout le monde. À Rodrigues, les besoins sont concrets ; un grand besoin de structures de refuge sécurisé pour les victimes, de soutien psychologique et aide juridique, hébergement temporaire et assistance médicale, psychologique, parfois psychiatrique, réinsertion professionnelle, suivi éducatif pour les enfants, et nous devons élargir le mandat des refuges, inclure la sécurité numérique, reconnaître les preuves digitales devant les tribunaux, tenir les plateformes responsables des abus en ligne. Je les propose pour des amendements dans un futur proche, Madame la présidente.

Protéger les victimes ne suffit pas. Il faut transformer les comportements des auteurs et le projet de loi prévoit des évaluations psychologiques, des programmes de réhabilitation sous contrôle judiciaire, et c'est louable. Un auteur responsabilisé et réinséré peut devenir un membre respectueux de sa famille et de notre société et montrer que le changement est possible. Croyons en chaque humain, Madame la présidente. La question de la confidentialité est essentielle pour protéger les victimes, protéger aussi les auteurs, protéger les enfants. Ce projet de loi prévoit des audiences à huis clos, comme cela se pratique déjà d'ailleurs dans les pays tels que le Royaume-Uni, Danemark, Jamaïque, Serbie. Les victimes ont besoin de soutien, de dignité. Les auteurs ne doivent pas seulement être responsabilisés mais être accompagnés durablement pour changer, et l'accompagnement ouvrira des chemins de transformation.

Nous devons, Madame la présidente, vérifier que les promesses d'aujourd'hui deviennent réalité, suivre les statistiques, mesurer les progrès, constater si les refuges sont construits, si les victimes sont accompagnées, si les auteurs sont réhabilités. La balle est dans le camp de notre Assemblée régionale aussi à Rodrigues, en collaboration avec les ministères de tutelle ici à Maurice. Et d'autres pays de la *SADC* ont déjà franchi cette étape ; ils ont modernisé leurs lois, affirmé que la dignité humaine est non négociable. Et à notre République de faire ce pas aussi pour protéger chaque citoyen sur chaque île. Nous devons aller plus loin, mandater l'éducation à la sécurité numérique, établir peut-être un groupe de

travail multipartite, examiner les lacunes législatives, violence basée sur le genre, cybercriminalité, protéger la sanctité de la vie privée autant que la vie publique des familles.

Protéger les foyers n'est pas seulement la responsabilité de Madame la ministre ou de son ministère. C'est l'affaire de tous ! Adoptons ce projet de loi avec conviction. Engageons-nous à donner à Rodrigues, à Maurice, aux autres îles les moyens nécessaires. Ainsi, nous affirmerons que la dignité et la justice seront respectées dans chaque foyer, dans chaque communauté, dans chaque île de notre République. Nous avons les outils, Madame la présidente. La Vice-Première ministre, ministre de l'Égalité des genres, l'a dit un peu plus tôt. Nous avons désormais le cadre et nous avons le devoir de nous engager pleinement.

Merci beaucoup.

**Madam Speaker:** Je vous remercie. Hon. Rookny!

(7.10 p.m.)

**Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet):** Madam Speaker, there is one question that victims of domestic abuse have been asked for generations: 'if it was so bad, why did you not leave?' It sounds like a perfectly reasonable question.

Yet, I have come to believe that it is perhaps the question that misunderstands the most. Because it assumes that domestic abuse begins with violence. It assumes that there is a moment when a perfectly normal relationship suddenly becomes abusive.

Life, unfortunately, is not that simple. Domestic abuse rarely begins with a slap. It begins with something much less visible. An imbalance of power and that imbalance grows so gradually that neither the victim nor those around them always recognise it until it is too late.

Madam Speaker, every human relationship involves power. A parent has power over a child, a teacher has power over a student, an employer has power over an employee, even within a marriage, power constantly shifts. Sometimes, one spouse earns more. Sometimes, one sacrifices a career to raise children. Sometimes, illness changes everything and one partner becomes completely dependent on the other.

Power in itself is not the problem. Power can be used to protect, to support, to encourage, to uplift. The true test of character is what we choose to do with the power that life entrusts us with. Domestic abuse begins when power ceases to be a responsibility and becomes an instrument of control. The opposite of love is not always hate.

In many homes, the opposite of love is control. Control over another person's movements, control over friendships, control over money, control over confidence, control over choices and that is precisely what makes domestic abuse so difficult to recognise. Because the most dangerous abuse is often the abuse that no longer looks like abuse. It hides behind concern – I am only asking because I care about you. It hides behind jealousy – *mo zalou akoz mo kontan twa*. It hides behind protection – I do not want you going there because I worry about your safety. One sentence taken in isolation may seem harmless but relationships are not built on isolated moments. They are built on repeated patterns. A request slowly becomes an expectation, an expectation becomes a rule, a rule becomes permission. And before long, one person no longer feels free to make ordinary decisions without first seeking approval from one another. By then, something precious has already been lost. *Liberté*, freedom.

Modern psychology has helped us understand something that previous generations perhaps did not fully appreciate. Human beings possess an extraordinary capacity to adapt. This is one of our greatest strengths. It allows us to overcome illness, to survive hardship, to rebuild after strategy. But the same capacity can also become one of our greatest vulnerabilities. Because people do not usually surrender their freedom all at once. They surrender it little by little. One compromise a day, another tomorrow, a friendship quietly abandoned, a career opportunity declined, a bank account handed over, *parski li pli fasil*.

A growing reluctance to disagree simply pour *evit lamerdmen*. None of those decisions appear dramatic on its own. Yet, taken together, they gradually reshape an entire life. This is why I believe we should be careful before asking someone why they remained in an abusive relationship. We should perhaps ask, how did another human being gradually lose their freedom to live as themselves without anyone noticing?

Madam Speaker, Parliament should not diagnose personalities. This is neither our role nor our expertise. The law is not interested in labels. The law is interested with conduct. What matters is not whether someone fits a psychological diagnosis. What matters is behaviour. Do they isolate another person? Do they constantly humiliate them? Do they manipulate reality until the victim begins to doubt their own judgment? Do they control through fear? Do they reduce another person's confidence until dependence replaces independence? Those behaviours may arise in different personalities and for different reasons. But the harm they produce is remarkably familiar. That is where the law must intervene.

Madam Speaker, one of the reasons I welcome this debate is because our understanding of domestic abuse has evolved. 30 years ago, many people thought almost exclusively of physical violence, if there was no bruise, many assumed there was no abuse.

Today, we understand something much deeper. A person may never be struck and still live every single day in fear. A salary can become a weapon, silence can become a weapon, humiliation can become a weapon, dependence can become a weapon. The first thing domestic abuse steals is not safety, it is freedom. Once freedom has been taken away, violence often becomes easier because resistance has already been weakened.

Madam Speaker, perhaps one of the reasons domestic abuse appears more visible today is not simply because society has become more violent. It is also because society has become less willing to tolerate what previous generations often suffered in silence. Victims are speaking, communities are listening, institutions are responding, and today, Parliament is responding as well. I believe that is not a sign that society has failed. It is a sign that our collective conscience has evolved. That evolution deserves to be welcomed. Because every society should aspire not merely to punish abuse more effectively, but to recognise it earlier and that, Madam Speaker, is why this debate is so important.

Every society inherits traditions. Most of them deserve to be preserved, some deserve to be questioned, and a few deserve to be better understood. Growing up in a Hindu family, many of us heard a saying that a daughter once married should leave her husband's house only upon her death. I have reflected upon those words many times. I do not believe that we ever intended to condemn a woman to a life of suffering. I believe they reflected an ideal of commitment, an understanding that marriage would bring moments of joy, moments of sacrifice, and moments of difficulty, that families should not encourage separation at the first disagreement. That is a value worth preserving.

But somewhere along the way in certain homes, and perhaps in certain minds, perseverance was transformed into submission. Silence became a virtue; endurance became an obligation and preserving a marriage became more important than protecting the person. No culture should ever demand that. No religion teaches that. No tradition should be interpreted that way because commitment is a virtue. Suffering abuse is not. Marriage is sacred, but so too is dignity of every human being within that marriage.

Madam Speaker, I sometimes wonder whether unintentionally, we have all contributed to this problem. Not by committing abuse, but by normalising it. How many times have we

heard someone say – *li pou sanze aster. Pans to zafan. Pa kas menaz*. These words are rarely spoken with bad intentions. Most of the time they come from parents, from relatives, from neighbours, from friends. People who genuinely hope the relationship can still be saved.

But there are moments when preserving the appearance of a family becomes less important than protecting the safety of a human being. Knowing the difference requires wisdom and sometimes courage. Because there comes a point where encouraging someone to endure is no longer an act of love, it becomes an act of indifference.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius is a small country. We often say that everyone knows everyone. Usually, we say that with pride. And rightly so. It creates solidarity, community, belonging but there is another side to living in a small society. Sometimes everybody knows, yet nobody speaks. The neighbour hears the shouting, the colleague notices the sudden silence, the teacher sees the child becoming withdrawn. The family notices the unexplained anxiety. Yet everyone hopes someone else will intervene. Domestic abuse rarely survives because society approves of it. Too often it survives because society quietly accommodates it.

Madam Speaker, we often speak of economic abuse as though it concerns only bank accounts or salaries. In fact, it is much broader than that. Economic abuse exists wherever financial dependency becomes a means of control. Or where one person is left carrying responsibilities no human being should have to carry alone. Allow me to take a thought, a step further. Imagine an elderly couple. They have been married for 30 years. Their marriage was contracted under the *régime of séparation de biens*. The family home become legally belongs to the wife. The husband moved in the home when they were married. For three decades he repaired it, he painted it, he built extensions, he maintained it, he planted the garden, he paid for improvements whenever he could. He kept no receipts, no invoices, no records. Why would he? He was not preparing for litigation; they were building a marriage. Then, late in life the relationship breaks down beyond repair.

Legally the answer may be straightforward. Emotionally, it is anything but. The house belongs to one, the home belongs to both. I am not suggesting that every unfortunate legal consequence amounts to domestic abuse. It clearly does not but I am suggesting something else. Economic dependence accumulated over decades creates vulnerability. And wherever the vulnerability is deliberately exploited, where one spouse says you have nowhere to go, you have nothing left. You will leave with nothing. That is no longer simply a property dispute. It is power being exercised through economic dependence. And that, in my humble

view, is one of the most significant developments reflected in this legislation because it recognises that power is not exercised only with fists. Sometimes it is exercised with finances; sometimes with property, sometimes with fear.

Madam Speaker, the greatest inequalities in life are not always inequalities of wealth. Sometimes they are inequalities of choice. One person can leave; the other cannot. One person can rebuild, the other no longer has the years to do so. One person still has opportunities; the other has only memories. That is why vulnerability deserves the protection of law. Not because the law can erase suffering, it cannot, but because the law should never allow vulnerability to become an instrument of domination.

Madam Speaker, every now and then Parliament passes a law, that tells us something about the evolution of society. I believe this is one of those laws. 30 years ago, we asked one principal question. Has violence occurred? Today we ask a different question. Has someone been deprived of the freedom to live with dignity? That is a profound evolution. It tells us that Parliament is no longer waiting for visible injury before recognising invisible suffering. And I believe history will judge that to have been the correct direction.

Madam Speaker, one of the strengths of this Bill is that it acknowledges something which practitioners, psychologists, social workers and our own courts have increasingly recognised over the years. Abuse is rarely confined to one act. It is usually a pattern. Sometimes the individual acts insignificant, a sarcastic remark, a humiliating comment, control over a bank account. The law has now evolved to recognise that reality. I welcome that evolution.

Madam Speaker, our own courts have also taught us valuable lessons. Judges and magistrates have repeatedly reminded us that domestic abuse cases are among the most complex that come before our justice system. Not because the law is unclear, but because human relationships are.

The person seeking protection may still love the person against whom protection is sought. Children are involved, families are divided, evidence is not always straightforward. Victims sometimes withdraw complaints, sometimes they return, sometimes they are simply afraid. This is why legislation alone can never be enough. In truth, victims do not experience legislation, they experience institutions.

The police officer who answers the call, the Magistrate before whom she appears, the social worker who hears the case. If those institutions function in isolation, even the finest

legislation will struggle to fulfil its promise. The strength of this Bill will therefore not be measured solely by the words contained within it. It will be measured by the confidence that victims place in that system that gives those words life.

Madam Speaker, society evolves, human behaviour evolves, technology evolves, our understanding evolves. The law must have the humility to evolve as well. I therefore hope that in the years ahead, Parliament periodically reviews the implementation of this Act.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, I would like to think that tonight, a vulnerable person would be walking back to her house and she would not be listening to this debate. Even after proclamation, that person would not be studying the clauses but that person would know whether what we have done tonight will have an impact on her life, would afford that person more protection and for that, Madam Speaker, I support this, Bill.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. Before we go to the last speaker, hon. Ramkalawon; hon. Minister, I just want to tell you that he is going to be the fourth member of the Gender Caucus to speak tonight. We have had three already.

(7.27p.m.)

**Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil):** Madam Speaker, and hon. colleagues. The late Maya Angelou once wrote –

"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing, possibly without claiming it, she stands for all women."

Madam Speaker, as we gather in this Assembly to pass a law that protects the vulnerable, we must remember who we are as a people. We are a nation built on rich spiritual, cultural heritage. We do not merely respect women, we revere them. In our sacred epics and ancient mythology, women are not considered subordinate. They are manifested as goddesses. They are worshipped as Durga for her strength, Lakshmi for prosperity, Saraswati for wisdom, or Mary as the mother of God himself. Our traditions teach us that the divine feminine is the very source of life, energy and cosmic order.

And yet, Madam Speaker, what a painful, tragic contradiction we witness when a culture that bows before the image of a goddess in the temple tolerates the abuse of a woman in the home. For too long, the devastating reality of domestic violence has been treated by society as a private misfortune.

Today, through this Bill, we declare it by what it truly is, a public crisis, a violation of fundamental human rights and a stain on our collective conscience. Behind the statistics we will debate today, are real lives. Parents, children, neighbours who live in a perpetuate state of terror in the one place they should feel safest, their own homes. The bruises we can see are horrific, but it is the invisible erosion of self-worth, the systematic isolation and the constant fear that truly tears apart the fabric of our communities.

Madam Speaker, we cannot legislate love, nor can we mandate respect, but we can legislate protection. We can mandate accountability. This Bill is not merely a collection of legal clauses and penalties. It is a promise. A promise to the survivor that they will be heard. A promise to the abuser that they will face justice, and a promise to the next generation that we will no longer tolerate the intolerable. Madam Speaker, it is with a profound sense of urgency and responsibility that I move this Bill for the second reading.

The poet and civil activist, Audre Lorde, once wrote –

“I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.”

Today, we must acknowledge that the shackles of domestic abuse in modern Mauritius have evolved. They are no longer just physical. They are digital, financial and psychological.

I must commend the Attorney General and the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare for recognising this reality. The shift from the old Protection from Domestic Violence Act to this new Bill represents a massive leap forward. By expanding the definition of abuse to explicitly include emotional, psychological, and deeply articulated economic abuse, this Bill recognises that control can be exerted without ever raising a fist. To trap a partner in financial dependency, to sabotage their employment, to use digital platforms to stalk or blackmail them, these are acts of violence, and it is a triumph of this Bill that they are finally being named and criminalised as such.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the introduction of exclusion orders that keep victims and children in their homes while removing the perpetrator along mandatory rehabilitation programmes and technological accommodations for court hearings show a deeply compassionate victim-centric approach. This Bill understands that when violence erupts, the

victim should not be the one forced to flee the night with children in tow, seeking refuge in temporary shelter.

This Bill ensures that the aggrieved person and their children can remain in the safety and comfort of their own home while the perpetrator is legally removed. If the home is rented, the court can seamlessly transfer the tenancy to the victim while holding the abuser legally and financially liable for the rent. This keeps the victim's life stable, keeps children in their schools, and ensures that the financial burden of the crime falls squarely on the abuser, not the victim.

However, as parliamentarians, our sacred duty is not just to applaud intention, but to rigorously stress test execution. If we pass a law that looks flawless on paper, but crumbles under the weight of implementation, we do our people a grave disservice. Therefore, I must bring several critical considerations to the attention of this House.

Madam Speaker, as a society, we often ask ourselves a painful question whenever another woman dies: Why didn't she leave? But perhaps another question should be asked: Why was she forced to live in fear for so long? Many women remain in abusive relationships because they have children to protect. Others have nowhere to go. Some have no income of their own. Some fear retaliation. Others believe that the violence will stop.

Sadly, we know that in Mauritius, several domestic violence cases have ended in tragedy. We all have read heartbreaking news reports, where women were killed by their husbands, partners, or former partners after months or even years of abuse. Almost every Mauritian remembers these tragedies because they shocked the entire country. In many of these cases, neighbours later said, they had heard arguments. Family members said, they knew there were problems. Yet, the violence continued until it became fatal. Every one of those deaths reminds us that domestic abuse is not a private family matter. It is a public issue. It affects the whole society.

Madam Speaker, from a sociological point of view, domestic violence creates a cycle. A child who grows up watching violence at home may begin to believe that violence is normal. A little boy may grow up believing that domination is part of being a man. A little girl may grow up believing that suffering in silence is part of being a woman.

How can I forget the page 56 of my Sociology textbook, written by Ken Browne, ‘An Introduction to Sociology? The scene is in a kitchen where the mother is preparing food for the whole family. The daughter holds her hand and says, “Mom, when am I going to get that swollen black eye?” Can you imagine the scene? And the mother patiently answers, “Wait, my daughter, you will get it soon.” You can just imagine the scene.

If we fail to intervene today, we risk creating another generation of victims and another generation of abusers. That is why I, particularly, welcome the provisions protecting children who witness abuse. The Bill rightly recognises that children are also victims, even when they are not physically assaulted.

Madam Speaker, among the numerous strengths of this Bill is also that it improves coordination between the Police, the Ministry, health professionals, social workers, and other institutions. Instead of each agency working in isolation, they will share information and coordinate responses to protect victims more effectively. Domestic abuse is not simply a legal problem. It is a social problem. It is a psychological problem. It is a family problem. It requires the whole state to work together.

I would like to bring to your notice today that our district courts deal with a significant number of domestic violence-related applications and disputes. Unfortunately, these cases continue to occupy an important place in our legal system. Every case represents more than a court file. It represents a frightened woman, a traumatised child, a broken family, and sometimes a life that could have been saved if intervention had come earlier.

This Bill seeks, precisely, to intervene earlier, protect better, and coordinate faster. Victims can obtain Protection Orders more rapidly. Emergency interim orders may even be sought through technological means, where there is an immediate danger. This can literally save lives. When someone fears that they may not survive another night, justice cannot wait.

Madam Speaker, among all, I also welcome the rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. Punishment remains important, but sociology teaches us that if violent behaviour is never addressed, many offenders simply repeat the same conduct in future relationships. Rehabilitation does not replace accountability. It complements it by attempting to change behaviour while ensuring that victims remain protected.

Madam Speaker, a society should never be judged only by the heights of its buildings or the strength of its economy. It should also be judged by how it protects its most vulnerable, which is the priority of this Government by bringing forward this Bill.

Finally, this Bill does not just issue a piece of paper and walk away. It introduces mandatory compliance reviews. Every long-term protection order will be subject to a strict 3-month periodic review by State psychologists and enforcement officers. This ensures continuous oversight and monitoring, combined with mandated rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators to address the root causes of the toxic behaviour. This Bill actively works to break the generational cycle of violence.

Madam Speaker, we cannot pray for blessings from goddesses while turning a blind eye to the cries of the woman in our neighbourhood. This Bill is compassionate. It is comprehensive, and it is courageous. It tells every victim across Mauritius, “We see your pain. We recognise your struggle, and we are rewriting the laws of this land to guarantee your safety, your dignity, and your freedom.”

I would, today, end up this speech by the profound spiritual teacher Swami Vivekananda, who once perfectly captured this essence when he said –

“That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.

There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”

As part of a new man, I proudly cast my vote in favour of this Bill.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you very much, everyone. Very interesting debate. Hon. Dr. Aumeer.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr Jhummun rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 07 July 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** The House stands adjourned! Yes!

### MATTER RAISED

(7.42 p.m.)

#### CUREPIPE-ALLÉE BRILLIANT – LINE 81 EXTENSION

**Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal):** Merci. Donc, ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Transports.

**Madam Speaker:** I am being told it is closed today.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Non. L'honorable Chief Whip m'avait informé un peu plus tôt que c'était ouvert aujourd'hui.

**Ms Anquetil:** C'est ouvert aujourd'hui.

**Madam Speaker:** Allez-y.

**Ms J. Bérenger:** Merci. Donc, ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Transports terrestres. Elle concerne la ligne 81 qui vient de Curepipe, passe par Allée Brillant et s'arrête à côté du Club Hippique. La requête, qui avait déjà été faite dans le passé d'ailleurs, est que cette ligne puisse continuer tout le long de l'Allée Brillant en rajoutant un arrêt vers la fin de l'Allée Brillant pour rejoindre l'avenue Sivananda et ensuite redescendre vers la gare de Vacoas.

Ce n'est pas un changement compliqué mais qui soulagerait énormément les habitants de la région de Sadally, Granum, Mangalkhan qui doivent souvent payer un taxi pour se rendre dans le centre de Vacoas. Je lui demanderais de bien vouloir reconsidérer la requête.

Merci.

**Madam Speaker:** Monsieur l'honorable Ministre!

**The Minister of Land Transport (Mr Osman Mahomed):** Madam Speaker, it will involve bringing a variation to that line. I will certainly raise up the matter with the NLTA for consideration.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you so much. We are okay now. So, now, we can leave peacefully.

*At 7.43 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 07 July 2026 at 11.30 a.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### PENSION REFORM – STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETINGS & INTERIM REPORT

**(No. B/918) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Steering Committee on Pension Reform, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number of meetings held since the setting up thereof to date, and
- (b) respective dates on which the Committee was apprised of, and subsequently validated, the interim report of the Commission of Experts on Pension Reform.

*(Vide Reply to PQ B/915)*

### POLICE – THUNDERSTRIKE OPERATIONS – ARRESTS OUTCOME & UNIT ESTABLISHMENT

**(No. B/919) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the 'Thunderstrike operations', he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of arrests effected in connection therewith, and

- (b) whether consideration is being given for the establishment thereof into a permanent unit within the Mauritius Police Force.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **PARLIAMENTARIANS (2014–2024) – OFFICIAL VEHICLE ACQUISITION**

**(No. B/921) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to official vehicles acquired over the period December 2014 to November 2024 for use by the then Honourable Members of Parliament entitled thereto other than the Honourable Ministers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) number of vehicles so acquired;
- (b) names of the beneficiaries thereof, and
- (c) total costs thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **MAURITIUS TURF CLUB – CAMERAS PURCHASE – COSTS INCURRED**

**(No. B/923) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Gambling Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to whether it has recently incurred expenses for the purchase of cameras for the Mauritius Turf Club and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) cost thereof, and
- (b) reasons and justifications therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – SOCIAL HOUSING NEEDS – MEASURES ENVISAGED**

**(No. B/949) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing needs of the inhabitants of Constituency No. 11, Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, he will state –

- (a) the measures taken and/or being envisaged to meet same following delays in the completion of the Ballison Rose Belle Social Housing Project, and

- (b) whether consideration will be given for the allocation of existing social housing units, already completed in neighbouring localities, to eligible beneficiaries of the said Constituency.

*(Withdrawn)*

**ROCHE TERRE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS –  
CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/950) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Roche Terre Government School, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the construction of pedestrian walkways with appropriate handrails in the vicinity thereof and, if so, indicate the proposed timeframe therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

**METRO EXPRESS – SERVICE EXTENSION – SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
& SOUTHERN REGION**

**(No. B/952) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to whether consideration is being given for the extension thereof to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and to the southern region of the island.

*(Withdrawn)*

**FORBACH ROAD – HEAVY RAINFALLS – REMEDIAL MEASURES**

**(No. B/954) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the conditions of the Forbach Road, particularly during heavy rainfalls, in the vicinity of the three basalt and construction companies operating thereat, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the urgent remedial measures being envisaged, indicating whether consultations have been held with the said companies in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**GOODLANDS – FORMER TRAFFIC CENTRE – SECURE SPORTS COMPLEX  
DEVELOPMENT**

**(No. B/955) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the premises on which stood the former Traffic Centre at Goodlands, he will state whether consideration will be given for the development of a secure sports complex comprising indoor and outdoor sporting facilities thereat to benefit the youth and residents of the region.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT –  
ACCIDENT UNIT**

**(No. B/956) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Accident Unit of the National Occupational Safety and Health Department, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) monthly number of occupational accident cases reported thereto since January 2026 to date and table the details and outcomes thereof, and
- (b) number of officers responsible to investigate same and conduct site visits/record statements, indicating the prescribed timeframe, if any, for the carrying out of the investigation and conclusion of cases and whether delays have occurred therein and, if so, why.

*(Withdrawn)*

**AGRO-SOLAR ENERGY – ONGOING PROJECTS**

**(No. B/957) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the development of agro-solar energy, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of ongoing projects, and
- (b) state the conditions imposed and incentives granted by Government for the promotion thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **M4 MOTORWAY PROJECT (FORBACH-AIRPORT) – CONTRACT AWARD**

**(No. B/958) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed M4 Motorway Project linking Forbach to the Airport, as announced in the Budget Speech, he will state whether local and international bids will be called for, indicating whether, in the event the contract is awarded to foreign contractors, provisions will be made for –

- (a) the participation of local contractors/subcontractors, including Small and Medium Enterprises, and
- (b) local stakeholders to benefit from the economic opportunities, employment creation and transfer of expertise in connection therewith.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **E-HEALTH PROJECT – COMPLETION DATE & COST**

**(No. B/960) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the E-Health project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) expected completion date thereof, and
- (b) total cost thereof, indicating the cost incurred as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **PUBLIC SERVICE – ACTING CAPACITIES – IMPACT ON ASSIGNEES**

**(No. A/58) Dr. Ms B. Thannoo (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the holding of office in acting capacities, he will state the –

- (a) posts currently concerned therewith and the duration thereof, and
- (b) impact thereof on the motivation and job satisfaction of the officers concerned, indicating whether –
  - (i) they concurrently hold responsibilities of two posts;
  - (ii) the provisions governing same comply with the International Labour Organisation's decent work agenda, fundamental principles and rights at work, and
  - (iii) the duration thereof would be limited to a six months' maximum period.

**Reply:** There are presently certain posts in the public service which may be filled on a contractual basis or in an acting capacity from among eligible serving public officers in view of the sensitive nature of the responsibilities devolving upon such positions.

These serving officers perform duties pertaining exclusively to the higher positions and are eligible for payment of an acting allowance and benefits attached to the higher posts. They are also eligible for pension benefits on the basis of the emoluments of the higher posts in case they have performed in the higher positions for a period of one year or more or for a period of at least six months upon reaching compulsory retirement age.

Acting appointment or assignment of duties to higher posts, in all other cases, are generally resorted to fill short-term temporary gaps arising out of vacancies or extended absences of officers to ensure operational continuity of Government services.

These public officers are eligible for payment of an allowance at the approved rates. They are also eligible for payment of end-of-year bonus if they have served in the higher position for a continuous period of at least four months in a calendar year and payment of pension benefits on the basis of the emoluments of the higher posts if they have performed the higher duties for a period of at least two years or an aggregate period of at least two years within a period of three years.

Generally, acting appointment and assignment of duties have a positive effect on the motivation and job satisfaction of assignees as the general conditions governing such arrangements recognise the officers' competence, experience, potential for growth, development of managerial skills and acquisition of valuable practical experience.

Government remains firmly committed to the promotion of decent work, social justice and respect for internationally recognised labour standards. The terms and conditions relating to acting appointments or assignment of duties as recommended by the PRB in terms of career growth, personal development and contribution to social growth do comply with the fundamental principles of the Decent Work Agenda of ILO.

Taking into consideration the package of incentives underpinning acting appointment and assignment of duties as set out above, it would not be appropriate to limit the duration of the period of assignment as it would be to the detriment of officers concerned.

**RODRIGUES – NATIONAL COOPERATIVE POLICY – COLLABORATION &  
COOPERATION CALENDAR**

(No. A/61) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperative whether, in regard to the application of the National Cooperative Policy in Rodrigues Island, he will state whether a collaboration and cooperation calendar has been established with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in relation thereto and, if not, why not, indicating the measures being envisaged to initiate same.

**Reply:** I have been informed by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Cooperatives & Ors of Rodrigues that there is currently no National Cooperative Policy in Rodrigues.

The cooperative movement in Rodrigues constitutes a major pillar of the Rodriguan economy. The movement comprises 56 active cooperative societies and 69 dormant cooperative societies with a total of 13,180 members and an annual turnover of approximately Rs350 million. Cooperatives Societies in Rodrigues Island are active in strategic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, transport, financial services, handicrafts and food processing, thereby contributing significantly to employment creation, food security, social inclusion and community development.

I have been apprised that there is presently no formal collaboration and cooperation calendar jointly established between my Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly specifically for the implementation of the National Cooperative Policy. However, cooperation between the two institutions is continuous, multifaceted and operationally embedded through existing legal, institutional, technical and collaborative mechanisms.

Legally speaking, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Principal Cooperative Auditor continue to exercise the powers and responsibilities vested in them under the Cooperatives Act. These statutory functions are extended to Rodrigues and are exercised in a manner that promotes transparency, accountability and good governance within cooperative societies. The auditing of cooperative societies is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Cooperatives Act and the Cooperatives (Annual Revenue of Society) Regulations 2017, thereby ensuring sound financial management and safeguarding the interests of cooperative members.

At the level of institutions, cooperative societies in Rodrigues benefit from a broad range of support measures. These include registration services, free audit services, assistance in the preparation of the financial statements mounting of project proposals, access to grant schemes and cooperative marketing initiatives. Besides, sensitisation campaigns on Government support measures and the AML/CFT framework amongst others are equally

organised. Further to that, training and capacity building opportunities are delivered through the National Cooperative College in conjunction with other institutional stakeholders.

It is worth mentioning that a collaboration framework between the Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the National Co-operative College (NCC) and the Commission for Agriculture, Cooperatives & Ors in Rodrigues was concluded in July 2025, paving the way for the delivery of an MQA-approved "Certificate in Cooperative Management" in Rodrigues. The programme, spanning over 1,080 learning hours, was jointly financed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the National Cooperative College at a total cost of Rs459,700 and attracted an enrolment of 21 participants. The programme has almost been completed, with 16 participants having undertaken a study visit in Mauritius from 11 to 14 June 2026 and currently are in the process of finalising their study visit reports prior to being awarded a proper "Certificate in Cooperative Management".

In addition, Rodriguan cooperative societies have benefitted from my Ministry, various Government grant schemes, including the "Boost to Local Production Scheme", the "Seedlings Production Scheme" and the "Digitalisation Scheme". These schemes are intended to enhance productivity, innovation, resilience and competitiveness within the cooperative sector in Rodrigues. Since Financial Year 2020-2021, a total amount of Rs992,896 had been disbursed to cooperative societies in Rodrigues under specific grant schemes. My Ministry maintains regular engagement with the Rodrigues Commission for Agriculture, Cooperatives & Ors which is responsible for Cooperative societies through consultations, technical exchanges, workshops, training activities, monitoring exercises and advisory support. Whenever requests are submitted by the Rodrigues authorities, officers of my Ministry respond promptly. Coupled with that, technical officers are regularly deployed to extend their expert services, conduct audits and inspections, where necessary.

My Ministry organised the National Cooperatives Excellence Awards on 30 April 2026, with particular attention accorded to cooperative societies in Rodrigues. A total of 21 Rodriguan cooperative societies participated in the competition. Three Rodriguan societies were recognised for their outstanding performance, namely –

- (i) the United Development Cooperative Credit Union Ltd which was awarded the Winner prize and a cash prize of Rs75,000;
- (ii) the Nassola Cooperative Credit Union Ltd received the Runner-Up prize and a cash prize of Rs50,000, and

- (iii) the Cooperative Polyvalente Le Solitaire Limitee was honoured with a Special Jury Award and a cash prize of Rs50,000.

Two representatives per awardee were invited, accompanied by one officer from the Cooperative Division of Rodrigues and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Cooperatives & Ors.

It is important to underscore that this collaborative approach fully respects the autonomy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the discharge of its responsibilities whilst ensuring that cooperative societies in Rodrigues continue to benefit from the expertise, legal and institutional support available through my Ministry.

The National Cooperative College has charted a training plan till December 2026 for cooperative societies in Rodrigues. It includes training on AML/CFT, a second cohort for the certificate in "Cooperative Management leadership" and a webinar with Malaysia and India on "Cooperative for a sustainable inclusive future".

As regards future measures, my Ministry remains committed to further strengthening cooperation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. In this connection, consultations are envisaged with the Commission for Agriculture, Cooperatives & Ors, with a view to developing a more structured framework for planning, coordination and information sharing for the development of a National Cooperative Policy for Rodrigues. Such arrangements would facilitate greater synergy between the respective institutions whilst preserving the autonomy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the statutory powers conferred upon the Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Principal Cooperative Auditor under the Cooperatives Act.