



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 11 APRIL 2023**

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**THE CABINET**

**(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)**

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications,  Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning,  Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail  Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs

	and Cooperatives
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping

Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah

Minister of Gender Equality and Family  
Welfare

Hon. Avinash Teeluck

Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage

Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal

Minister of Public Service, Administrative  
and Institutional Reforms

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**MAURITIUS**

**Seventh National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 03 of 2023**

**Sitting of Tuesday 11 April 2023**

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

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Mr Speaker in the Chair)*

**ANNOUNCEMENT****“AU COEUR DE L’INFO” - HON. DR. BOOLELL - RADIO INTERVIEW**

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, further to my announcement on Tuesday last with regard to Dr. the honourable Boolell for having uttered outrageous and contemptuous words and expressions to my address during an interview on the radio in the course of the programme “*Au Coeur de l’info*” on Radio Plus on Tuesday 28 March 2023, I have to announce the following –

I reiterate my view that those words and expressions are in fact outrageous and contemptuous of the Chair and constitute a contempt of the Assembly and a serious breach of its privileges.

I have to draw the attention of the House that so far, I have not received any privilege complaint and therefore, the Chair is not in a position to act under the provisions of the law relating to contempt of the Assembly.

However, the absence of such notice does not undermine my position to take action to protect the House from the invasion of its privileges.

In this context, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the provisions of Standing Order 49(8) which provides, and I quote –

“Nothing in this Order shall be deemed to prevent the Assembly from proceeding against any Member for any breach of order not specified herein or from proceeding in any other way it thinks fit in dealing with the breaches of order herein mentioned.”

Hon. Members, in line with the provisions of Standing Order 49(8) and the powers conferred upon me under Standing Order 77, I leave the matter in the hands of the House for any action it may deem appropriate.

**MOTIONS – S.O 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your ruling, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3), to take the time of the House for urgent business.

**The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*



**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, having obtained your permission, I beg to move under Standing Order 29(1), to present a motion without notice.

**The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your ruling and in terms of the provisions of Standing Order 49(8), I beg to move that Dr. the hon. Boolell be suspended from the service of the Assembly...

**Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame!

**The Prime Minister:** ... for today's Sitting and the next two Sittings unless unreserved apologies are tendered to the House.

**The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**Mr Bérenger:** *Souser!*

**An hon. Member:** *Bachara!*

**The Prime Minister:** *Souser?*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I heard hon. Bérenger uttering the word '*souser*'.

**Mr Speaker:** I will come to this later.

**Mr Bérenger:** Yes!

**The Prime Minister:** Yes! And he has confirmed.

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell, do you have apologies?

*(Interruptions)*

So, I will come to this point of order you just raised, hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Bérenger, would you present apologies?

**Mr Bérenger:** Certainly not!

**Mr Speaker:** Therefore, hon. Bérenger, you don't mind to leave the House?

**Mr Bérenger:** Give your ruling!

**Mr Speaker:** Leave the House!

**Mr Bérenger:** At least you can say that!

**Mr Speaker:** Leave the House!

**Mr Bérenger:** Shame!

**An Hon. Member:** Shame!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! No more remarks or comments! If not...

**Mr Bérenger:** Shame!

**Mr Speaker:** I am naming you!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** *Dominer! Dominer!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I am naming you!

**Mr Bérenger:** *Zako!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I am naming you!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** *Dominer!*

**PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

**A. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development**

- (a) The Economic Development Board (Mauritian Diaspora Scheme) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 35 of 2023)
- (b) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 36 of 2023)
- (c) The Private Pension Schemes (Non-Citizens) Rules 2023. (Government Notice No. 41 of 2023)
- (d) The Private Pension Schemes (Licensing and Authorisation) (Amendment) Rules 2023. (Government Notice No. 42 of 2023)

**B. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training****Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 37 of 2023)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 38 of 2023)
- (c) The Media Employees (Remuneration) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 39 of 2023)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Price Label) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 43 of 2023)

**C. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage**

The National Heritage Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 40 of 2023)

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I am still in a state of shock, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I will ask my question.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### DAVOT & MANGIN LAND - ECO DEER PARK ASSOCIATION – LEASE APPLICATION

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the land Davot and Mangin of an extent of 251 hectares, he will state –

- (a) the date on which Eco Deer Park Association applied for a lease on the property;
- (b) the date of signature of the lease;
- (c) if, in September 2020, he attended an event on the site and, if so, indicate –
  - (i) at whose invitation;
  - (ii) for what purpose, and
  - (iii) the names of the other persons present.

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of Opposition for his Private Notice Question which gives me an opportunity to provide information and clarifications on this matter to the House, particularly relating to the *chassé* on State land.

In respect of forest land, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are around 22,000Ha of forest State land which fall under the purview of my Ministry while there are approximately 25,000Ha of forest land belonging to the private sector. Out of the 22,000Ha of forest State land, there are 10,000Ha approximately suitable for lease for shooting and fishing purposes.

Lease of State forest land dates back to the colonial period where forest lands were leased for hunting and shooting purposes.

With the coming into force of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966, a legal framework was established to enable the lease of State forest lands for rearing and hunting of deer, fowls and the undertaking of eco-tourism activities such as nature based and related

activities. The Shooting and Fishing Leases Act gives the lessee the right, under various conditions to –

- a. shoot and go in pursuit of game;
- b. fish, hunt, and
- c. subject to the payment of such fees as may be prescribed, to carry out eco-tourism activities.

The Forest Policy of my Ministry was adopted in 2006 with regard to deer rearing on State forest lands which aims at –

- contributing to the enhancement of the environment through increasing forest and tree cover;
- ensuring sustainable management of State-owned forest land leased for deer rearing, and
- encouraging sustainable management of private forests opened up for deer rearing, taking into consideration legislation on property rights and environmentally sensitive areas.

At present, out of the approximately 22,000Ha of State forest land, about 10,762.79Ha of State forest land around the island are suitable for shooting and fishing. Most of them are found in the district of Plaine Wilhems. The remaining ones are conservation and protected areas scattered around the island, for example, near mountain slopes...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. My question is specific, and has to do with this land Davot and Mangin. Why is he taking me around the island for?

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am coming to it.

**Mr Speaker:** You may continue, hon. Minister!

**Mr Gobin:** I am coming to it, I reassure the House.

I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, the remaining ones are conservation and protected areas scattered around the island, for instance, near mountain slopes, nature reserves and environmentally sensitive regions under the Forest Reserves Act. Currently, there are about 39 running leases covering an area of approximately 6,300Ha. 26 leases are in the process of being

renewed covering an area of about 2,700Ha. And concerning the region of Grand Bassin, four leases totalling approximately 1,000Ha around Grand Bassin have been cancelled.

The Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966, provides for three methods of granting lease, which are –

- (i) to be put up for public auction,
- (ii) by way of tenders, and
- (iii) on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine.

Since the coming into force of the said Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966, the Ministry of Agriculture has had recourse only to the third option, that is, grant a lease on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine.

In line with the said Act, the duration of shooting and fishing leases does not exceed 14 years. Initially, the Lease Agreement is for a period of 7 years and renewed for another period of 7 years. After the expiry of 14 years, fresh Lease Agreements are drawn for lessees. Conditions attached to the lease are as set out in the Schedule to the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966.

Mr Speaker, Sir, processing of applications is handled at the level of the Forestry Service of my Ministry.

Monitoring, also, of forest State land falls under the responsibility of the Forestry Service of my Ministry.

Coming to part (a) of the question, Eco Deer Park Association, represented by one Mr A. T. of the said Association, submitted an application for lease to my Ministry by way of letter dated 05 November 2020 for lease of State land for shooting and fishing/eco-tourism activities under the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act.

The application was processed by the Forestry Service of the Ministry as is the case according to the policy applicable. Following recommendation of the Conservator of Forests for the grant of the lease to Eco Deer Park Association and in line with Section 3 of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966, approval was given on 27 July 2021 for the grant of the lease under the stipulated conditions set out in the Schedule to the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act

1966 over an extent of 273.17Ha at a place called Dayot, Grand Bassin to Eco Deer Park Association for period of 7 years for the promotion of deer rearing and hunting.

The Conservator of Forests was accordingly informed on 30 July 2021 and the latter was requested to submit a copy of the Lease Agreement for record purposes once the Lease Agreement was signed.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Lease Agreement was drawn on 17 February 2022 between the Government of Mauritius and Eco Deer Park Association. The Lease was registered with the Registrar General Department on 25 February 2022.

Mr Speaker, Sir, based on information received regarding activities contrary to the Lease Agreement being carried out on State forest land leased to Eco Deer Park Association at Dayot, region of Grand Bassin by one Mr J. H. C, a prompt investigation was undertaken by the Forestry Service on the alleged activities being undertaken at that site. The latter confirmed that the activities undertaken thereat were indeed outside the ambit of the Lease Agreement which constituted a breach of the Agreement.

Hence, on 07 March 2023, a Notice of Cancellation of the lease was served on the representative of the Eco Deer Park Association Ltd by a Registered Usher for the lessee to vacate the land within 48 hours.

My Ministry resumed possession of the State land as from Thursday 09 March 2023 and seals have been affixed at the entrance of the site. The assistance of the Police has been sought by the Forestry Service for the removal of concealed traps, following which a survey of the land will be undertaken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Conservator of Forests that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has initiated an enquiry and has, on 07 March 2023, secured the files related to the subject matter. The Forestry Service of my Ministry is collaborating with the ICAC in this enquiry.

Furthermore, ICAC has written to the Ministry on 17 March 2023 to inform that they are investigating into an allegation of corruption/money laundering in relation to the lease of a State

land at Davot to RKS Deer Ranch Ltd and the Eco Deer Park Association. My Ministry is providing all the information required by the ICAC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coming to part (c) of the question, this is the subject of a series of allegations made by one or more alleged suspects and/or witnesses who have given statements in the course of the enquiry being conducted by ICAC.

The said enquiry is ongoing and it is public knowledge that the said alleged suspects and/or witnesses and/or third parties have not yet completed their statements.

Since the ICAC is investigating in this matter, it will not be appropriate for me to make any statement in the matter in order not to undermine the ongoing investigation.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will come directly to the point. The lease that was signed by your representative, the person you designated upon your decision, to give this lease to Eco Deer Association, the person who signed the lease was one - and you will well know this - Vicky Giovanni Juliette. This Vicky Giovanni Juliette...

**Mr Speaker:** No, don't mention names!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Okay, I am sorry.

**Mr Speaker:** Apologise for that!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Okay, I will not mention names anymore. This person is a convicted drug trafficker, having served two years in prison for trafficking heroin and apart from that, he has other cases. Now, this is the person whom you personally decided to give 600 arpents of land in 2022 and this same person went on to have a business *Société Centrale de La Gaulette* with one famous Mr F. What have you got to say about this?

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I humbly beg to differ. I refer to the reply I gave to the main question. I stated that following the application which was by way of letter dated 05 November 2020, the application was processed by the Forestry Service of my Ministry. That application was signed on behalf of the Association by one Mr A. T. and approval was given as I stated in the main reply on 27 July 2021. At the material time, there was no Mr V.G. J. and whatever has been put by way of question by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, does not find its application with regard to the approval of the Ministry.



Now, having said so, whatever the Leader of the Opposition is saying that he was a convicted drug trafficker and how come he was a party to the Lease Agreement, this is precisely the subject matter of the investigation. I have an idea what has happened but I cannot say it now, having regard to the ongoing investigation. And especially, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate what I have said earlier; there are alleged suspects, there are witnesses whose statements have not been completed and it is public knowledge. We are reading about it in the press. I am also reading about it. So, it will not be in order for me to give any specific information with regard to the signature of the lease whether by Mr V. G. J. or any other person.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** This Mr J., a partner of Mr F., this same Mr F., whose file sat in his Office for three years in respect of a Rogatory Commission. What a coincidence, Mr Speaker, Sir, for the population of Mauritius to swallow that he decided to give a lease signed by a partner, a notorious drug trafficker, 700 arpents, even to facilitate his drug trade in these 700 arpents and this same person is associated with another person whose file remained dormant at his Ministry as Attorney General for three years. Don't rely, don't hide behind ICAC! Tell us like a man! Answer!

**Mr Speaker:** Put your question! You are making a statement!

**Mr Gobin:** I do not know whether the lady Members of the House will appreciate your comment as answering like a man!

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to Mr F. and the file which the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying has been sleeping in my Office, I would refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the House to the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister two weeks back, in answer to the Private Notice Question where the chronology has been clearly set out. It is not correct; it is wrong to say that the file has slept. The file was acted upon diligently. Application for Judge's Order was made, the Judge's Order was obtained, and the hearing before the Master and Registrar did take place. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to the application for extradition, that was not made way back in 2019, as is being alleged in certain quarters. That came only in February of this year and I won't say more because the application is pending before the District Court of Port Louis for both Mr F. and Mr D. Coming to Mr G., referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I quote "notorious drug trafficker", I don't have the necessary documentation in front of me.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition is trying to say that I have personally approved the lease for the Mr G., I emphatically deny that.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thought we were dealing with well-informed persons in this Assembly. Apparently, in general, the Minister of Justice, in charge of the DPP and the SLO is not aware of notorious drug traffickers. This is very dangerous.

**Mr Gobin:** No, I don't keep crime records.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I am going to ask the hon. Minister this question: how many other notorious drug dealers have obtained or are obtaining at this present time, land for their dirty business from him? Since he does not seem to be aware of who are the people that are actually occupying the land that he is giving.

**Mr Gobin:** No, these are serious allegations being made that leases are being given to drug dealers, Mr Speaker, Sir. I reiterate, the application was made on behalf of the Association in November 2020, signed by one Mr A. T. There was no application on behalf of Mr J. or any other person. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has any information about drug dealers etc., he may communicate.

I wish to add one thing. Earlier, the hon. Leader of the Opposition suggested that I ought to be knowing of the previous convictions of any person in this country. I do not have the record of Crime Record Office at my level, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is unfair to say that as Minister, I have access to the crime records of citizens of this country.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when someone comes to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage, six months before, you say yes. On the date of the wedding, somebody else turns up and you still say yes. This is what happens for this lease, Mr Speaker, Sir. The fact is that it is a convicted drug trafficker in heroin whose work had been facilitated by your action and your Ministry's action and you need to take responsibility for that.

**Mr Gobin:** I welcome the fact that there is an enquiry in this matter, Mr Speaker, Sir. Should this matter be proven, it is indeed then, in that case, a serious matter which ought to be investigated.

As I said earlier, I have an indication of what happened. I do not want to say it here and now having regard to the investigation which is ongoing where witnesses and third parties are still recording their statements at ICAC. That enquiry will proceed; the Ministry will collaborate fully, as I have said earlier and as the officers of the Ministry have confirmed, the Forestry Service will also collaborate. As I said earlier, ICAC has already taken the relevant files in their possession.

I am informed that, in fact, two files have been taken from the Forestry Service. There will be full collaboration in this matter with ICAC and any other investigatory body.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, unless I am mistaken again, there is a sacrosanct principle of ministerial responsibility in front of this House. ICAC does not come into it. You, Minister, are responsible to this House, and through this House to the Nation, for something that you have done and has been done under your guidance and under your responsibility and you cannot get away from answering questions!

**Mr Speaker:** No, hon. Leader of the Opposition, you mentioned: ‘something you have done under your guidance’ or whatever. The Minister just told you that an inquiry is being carried out. You said: ‘something you have done.’ Unless you can prove it!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I can prove it! I refer ...

**Mr Speaker:** What are you going to prove?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Just sit down, I will show you.

**Mr Speaker:** No, do not give me orders! I am asking you what ...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Section 3 of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act. He said it himself, it is his personal responsibility to give the lease.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, but you said: ‘something which you have done.’

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Of course, he has done, it has been given under his saying. What is wrong with you?

**Mr Speaker:** Unless the Minister has something to say on this.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I am asking the question.

**Mr Speaker:** I will not allow this question.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** So, you need to answer to this House concerning your ministerial responsibilities. It cannot be a fashion that this House now becomes some sort of stupid House where everything that is being investigated in other instances. You are a Minister, no longer responsible to this House. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will ask this question. There was the first ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** There is a point of order there.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** The first ...

**Mr Speaker:** There is a point of order.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** Let me listen to the point of order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Dhunoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Dhunoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Could the hon. Leader of the Opposition have a bit of respect for this House and remove the word 'stupid' House? Another point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir, he has been imputing motives on the Attorney General several times. He cannot impute motives; it is in the Standing Orders. If he does not know his Standing Orders, I can give him a copy and he can learn from it.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are advised...

*(Interruptions)*

Please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Two jobs I got in my life. I will come to that at some other time.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** These are personal comments!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, *quel mal élevé!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, hon. Lobine!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I got in two jobs!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Lobine, order!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, order!

*(Interruptions)*

Please, Order! Personal things, services, all these, these are housekeeping materials, do not bring this in this august Assembly. Put your question!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am trying to put my question. The first lease of RKS was cancelled or tried to be cancelled because of drug planting. But when we look at the composition of the second lessee, the Eco Deer Farm, in fact, we find that it is the same family. It is the nephews of Mr E., nieces of Mr E., sisters and all that, the same people who had the first lease. Now, isn't that a strange coincidence, Minister that your predecessor cancelled the lease, rightly so, for planting of *gandia*, a group of people, and the same group of people put their sisters, their nieces, their nephews and you give the lease? But add, of course, this famous drug trafficker to the source, Mr J., this is what happened. So, what have you got to say on that?

**Mr Gobin:** I have two things to say, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have to reiterate what I said earlier firstly, and then, I will come to Mr E., nephew and nieces. I reiterate, Mr Speaker, Sir, Eco Deer Park Association submitted an application for lease to my Ministry by way of letter dated 05 November 2020, signed by Mr A. T.

After processing of the application by the Forestry Service, in line with Section 3 of the Shooting and Fishing leases Act 1966, approval was given on 27 July 2021. Time is of the essence, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Coming to the nephew and nieces of Mr E., who would know who is a nephew or niece in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir? Having said so, I hasten to add, earlier we heard that, in fact, it was Mr J. who was the lessee, now we hear it is the nephew and niece of Mr E. I do not know how the nephew and niece of Mr E. is related to Mr J.?

Having said so, I hasten to add one more thing. If the Leader of the Opposition is well aware of the case of Mr E., especially about an ADSU case of cultivation of cannabis on the State Land and that is why the lease was cancelled, then I would refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the granting and the approval of that previous lease to R.K.S. Ranch Limited. That file has also been secured by the ICAC.

And you know what, Mr Speaker, Sir? Who and when approved and granted the lease to R.K.S. Ranch Limited in August 2007 and signed in 2008? The famous Mr E. then clearly was the lessee, not only one Mr E., but Mr E. brothers, when we had the cultivation of cannabis. Therefore, that lease was given to R.K.S. Ranch Limited where we had cases of cultivation and drug dealing and, let me say this again, the latest case of drug dealing is last year, August 2022. We are referring to these people.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the lease was renewed in 2015 by hon. Seeruttun.

*(Interruptions)*

I assume you two do not get on together.

*(Interruptions)*

That is a stupid answer.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister...

**Mr Gobin:** I am so sorry to interrupt.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister...

**Mr Gobin:** I am so sorry to interrupt the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I never treated you with the word 'stupid'.

*(Interruptions)*

If you treat my answers as stupid, you are treating me also. Let us...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I will not fight about it. I remove it, no problem.

**Mr Gobin:** No.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Now, let us talk about this famous case...

**Mr Gobin:** He should be withdrawing that word.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** ... of the stag party which you seem to be embarrassed of. Although you said you welcome this PNQ, you seem to be embarrassed to answer that. Now, let us talk about this 12 September, about the stag party. Is it a coincidence that following that stag party and following alleged payments made through some of your associates to you that in November 2020 - we are talking about September; it takes a bit of time to create an association, so the application must have been made immediately after your famous stag party - the association is formed? On 05 November 2020, an application is made, not only that but R. K. S. related to this new Eco withdraws its case in June 2021 to allow you to award the land in July 2021. Do you see the timeline, hon. Minister? Do you see the timeline from your famous stag party to the grant of the lease?

**Mr Speaker:** You have already put your question.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Yes, I am repeating because he is not answering. Obviously!

**Mr Gobin:** No, I am waiting for you to finish. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is precisely what I said earlier. These form part of a series of allegations where speculations surround the allegations made by parties who are giving statements before ICAC concerning the lease...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Were you there or not?

**Mr Gobin:** ...concerning the lease and concerning...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No! Let the Minister reply!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Were you at the party or not?

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

*(Interruptions)*

Leader of the Opposition, the Minister is replying; let him reply!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Were you there or not?

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Yes or no?

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Yes or no?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** Yes or no?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Time is over!

*(Interruptions)*

Time is over!

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Reponn.* Yes or no?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Yes or no?

*(Interruptions)*

**Hon. Members:** Yes or no?

**Mr Speaker:** Order!



*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Armance!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Armance!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Armance! If you want to stay in the House, behave yourself!

**An hon. Member:** Yes or no?

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Anne Marie Navarre!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** This is not my name!

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member of Parliament!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Member of Parliament, please behave yourself! You are in Parliament.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** I know I am in Parliament.

**Mr Speaker:** You are in Parliament, behave yourself.

*(Interruptions)*

No comments after my ruling!

*(Interruptions)*

No comments after my ruling!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Anne Marie is not my name!

**Mr Speaker:** Forget about your name! MP!

*(Interruptions)*

MP!

### **POLITICAL FINANCING BILL – INTRODUCTION**

**(No. B/109) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to political financing, he will state if he proposes to introduce another Political Financing Bill in the Assembly and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if it is accepted practice to receive donations in cash from foreign governments or foreign officials without documentations and declaration to the authorities.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of political financing has been the subject of debate over several years and, unfortunately, no proposal has so far met unanimity across the political spectrum. However, the first concrete attempt in our political history to introduce a Political Financing Bill into the National Assembly to regulate the financing of political parties was made in 2019. In fact, the genesis of this Bill can be traced back to December 2015 when Government, under the prime ministership of Late Sir Anerood Jugnauth, had set up a Ministerial Committee to make recommendations on several important aspects of our electoral system. The terms of reference of the Ministerial Committee were, amongst others, to make proposals on electoral reform with a view to introducing a dose of Proportional Representation in the National Assembly and proposing a draft Financing of Political Parties Bill.

The recommendations of the Ministerial Committee, chaired at that time by the Minister Mentor, were approved by Government on 30 November 2018. Following a consultation exercise, on 02 July 2019, I myself, as Prime Minister, introduced the Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Political Financing Bill in the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the object of the Political Financing Bill was to provide for accountability and transparency with regard to the financing, *inter alia*, of political parties at a general election, with a view to preventing undue influence and corruption. In addition to conferring powers to the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) and Electoral Commissioner

to investigate into the financial affairs of registered political parties for the better regulation of political financing, the Bill provided, *inter alia*, for the legal framework for political financing and donations, instances where acceptance of donation would be prohibited, ceiling on expenditure, limitations on donation-in-kind, and obligations to keep accounting records as well as sanctions and offences for non-compliance with provisions of that proposed legislation.

Given that the Political Financing Bill proposed, in addition, the widening of the functions and powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the Electoral Commissioner, relevant amendments to section 41 of the Constitution were required. Accordingly, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which aimed at providing additional powers and functions to the ESC and the Electoral Commissioner, was introduced at the same time as the Political Financing Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also apposite to note that under clause 12 of the Political Financing Bill, donations from foreign Governments, foreign entities and non-citizens to political parties would not have been allowed and would have been treated as prohibited donations.

In fact, according to the database of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, out of 180 countries, 126 have placed some form of ban on donations from foreign Governments or foreign individuals. Such countries include the United Kingdom, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, the United States, Japan, Norway, Canada, Brazil and France amongst others. The main argument behind is to limit the threat of foreign interests undermining a country's democracy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition, the Political Financing Bill provided that no person shall make a donation to an individual member of a registered political party, other than to the treasurer of that party. Obligations for political parties to keep a Register of Donations as well as accounting records showing, *inter alia*, entries of all donations received and the requirement to submit an audited Statement of Account to the ESC were also provided therein.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regrettably, both Bills could not secure a three-quarter majority as required by section 47(2)(b) of the Constitution, as the Opposition parties voted against the enactment of the Bills.

The rejection of the Political Financing Bill demonstrated the lack of will of the Opposition parties to promote a culture of transparency and integrity in the political arena. In fact, after the rejection of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill in 2018, this turned out to be the second time that the Opposition boycotted prominent attempts at electoral reform.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that, although the Opposition parties had commissioned a few reports on electoral reform when they were in Government, they never walked the talk. Moreover, none of their reports addressed the issue of political financing. Let me cite a few examples. Neither the Carcassonne Report which was released in 2011 nor the Sithanen Report, published in January 2012, dealt with the issue of political financing. Similarly, the Consultation Paper on Electoral Reform, which was presented by the then Prime Minister in March 2014, overlooked that issue. Reports that examined political financing are the Sachs Commission Report of 2002 and the Select Committee set up in 2002 under the Chair of Mr Emmanuel Leung Shing on Funding of Political Parties.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to highlight that since November 2019 I am heading a new Government with new political partners, and we shall be holding consultations on the electoral reform which the Government would wish to bring about, including political financing. Once the Government comes up with a proposal and formula for the financing of political parties, consultations would be held with the Electoral Supervisory Commission, the Electoral Commissioner and other relevant stakeholders and the Bill would be introduced in the National Assembly in due course.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I wish to highlight that to date, there is no provision in our electoral legislation which prohibits receiving donations from foreign sources. Rather, we have limits on electoral expenses under Part IV (sections 49 to 57) of the Representation of the People Act, in regard to election expenses incurred by candidates at an election.

Mr Speaker, Sir, however, with regard to acceptance of cash donations, whether from local or foreign sources, any person who makes or accepts any payment in cash in excess of Rs500,000 or an equivalent amount in foreign currency or such amount as may be prescribed, shall commit an offence under the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, it would constitute an offence under the Customs Act and the Customs Regulations 1989, if a person, whether incoming, outgoing or in transit, makes a physical cross-border transportation of, amongst others, currency of an amount of more than 500,000 Mauritian rupees or its equivalent in foreign currency, without making a declaration to Customs.

So as to be in conformity with the Customs legislation, such person should submit the relevant declaration form to the Customs or make an online declaration through the MRA website.

**Mrs Luchmun Roy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister mentioned about December 2015 where there was the setting up of a Ministerial Committee on the Electoral Reform. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, the said Committee submitted any report on the issue of financing of political parties, and if yes, whether the contents of the said report were taken on board in the preparation of the Political Financing Bill which was introduced to the House in 2019? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I can recall that in fact, initially, the Committee was set under the Chair of hon. Xavier Luc Duval when he was in Government. It was set up in December 2015 and it had in fact submitted a report on the financing of political parties in April 2016. The report, however, was very scanty and was lacking in important details such that the Attorney General's Office was unable to prepare a Bill.

I am informed that the Attorney General's Office, consequently, had raised a series of questions and issues which had to be addressed before they could even start preparing the Bill, and amongst the issues that were raised were the following –

- the scope of the additional powers which had to be given to the Electoral Supervisory Commission;
- the transparency and disclosure rules that would apply to private funding;
- the applicability to political donations of the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money laundering Act that had to be clearly set out;

- consultations also with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on the proposed new expenditure thresholds in relation particularly to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly elections, and
- the absence of indication about the type of sanctions that would apply in case of any breach of the law.

All these issues, Mr Speaker, Sir, had not been addressed by the then Deputy Prime Minister in his report. Following the departure of the then Deputy Prime Minister from Government, the newly constituted Ministerial Committee under the Chair of Minister Mentor re-examined all those issues, particularly those that were raised by the State Law Office, and made appropriate recommendations that were taken on board in the preparation of the 2019 Bill.

**Mrs Luchmun Roy:** Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Referring to the second part of my question again, has the hon. Prime Minister taken cognisance of statement made by the former Prime Minister, on Friday 10 of March, on a private radio whereby he confirmed that he received a donation from foreign sources dollar notes sealed packets? If yes, can the hon. Prime Minister inform whether the former Prime Minister has complied with the law? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** Let me check. I have also requested a transcript of what was said during this interview. There were, of course, different comments that were made during a broadcast by a private radio by the former Prime Minister with regard to this particular issue. We know that there were dollar notes in sealed packets that had been found in his coffer. Out of a total of 3.16 million dollars, 1.7 million dollars were in sealed plastic bags and were serially numbered. Although the latter confirmed that he had received those dollars from foreign sources, he has still not yet revealed these sources.

Concerning the second part of the question, when I read the transcript from the interview given by the former Prime Minister, I must say it is obvious that those dollars were not declared. Let me remind the House again that according to section 131 (a) of the Customs Act, there is an obligation to declare any amount of funds entering or leaving Mauritius in excess of Rs500,000. I note that in that interview he carefully replies by saying that he had no choice in fact. The law is there, he could not abide by the law and he had no choice than not to abide by the law! This is really amazing, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Nuckcheddy!

**Mr Nuckcheddy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if any political parties in recent years have obtained donations from companies operating a Ponzi Scheme? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the House and the nation know fully well about the existence of a huge Ponzi Scheme being operated by BAI. It was mentioned, in fact, for the very first time in this House by no one else than hon. Paul Bérenger when he addressed on 21 November 2013 a PNQ in his capacity as the then Leader of the Opposition to the then Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. The then Leader of the Opposition stated and I quote –

“The whole financial system was based on an insurance make-up built on a huge Ponzi Scheme.”

However, we also know that after concluding an alliance with the Labour Party for the 2014 General Elections, the MMM led by hon. Paul Bérenger accepted a cheque of Rs10 m. dated 06 November 2014 as donation from the same BAI that he had accused of running a huge Ponzi Scheme.

**Mr Nuckcheddy:** Hon. Prime Minister, can you properly repeat the amount that was given to that party?

**The Prime Minister:** In this particular case, I said Rs10 m. by cheque.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bodha!

**Mr Bodha:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, I think he will recollect that one of the fundamental contentions was about public funding of political parties? We are very near a consensus to have a majority in the House, and the question was whether we can have public funding together with private funding, as is the case in France and elsewhere, even if we could do it symbolically. So, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the position of the MSM is still not to consider public funding? I would also ask him whether he can give us a time frame for the presentation of this Bill which is to come in the House.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will surely recall that the original draft had included a recommendation for public funding. Then, through consultations, as he will recall, we decided at that time that we would not be moving for public funding because some Members of the Opposition had already taken a stand against public funding. The hon. Member

will also recall there was a campaign that had started in public saying: “Why is it that now Government should start funding a political party?” We said let us move step by step. This is why we limited the proposal to financing by private parties.

The hon. Member will further recall that he was also part of the Committee, that he was also a Member of the Government, and that he also took part in the debate, and also defended that Bill and, in fact, voted for the Bill. I am happy, but I hope he has not changed his mind today because he is in the Opposition.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, of course, we will. As I have stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, now it is not the same Government because we have other partners in alliance and also other Members in Government. We shall be holding those consultations, and then we shall also hold consultations with Members of the Opposition and, of course, with the public at large. I hope this time we can rally a consensus because I think it is high time that we put our ego aside and come up with a Bill so that we can regulate the financing of political parties.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

**Mrs Mayotte:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister state whether there was any mention of Political Financing Bill prior to 2014?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the records available, I am informed as follows –

- in the SACHS Report on electoral reform of 2002, the creation of political activities, public financing fund was proposed and the SACHS Commission also came up with a draft Bill on political funding;
- the 2004 Leung Shing Report was, in fact, on funding of political parties and also included a draft Bill on political financing;
- in the 2011 Carcassonne Report on electoral reform, there was no mention of political funding;
- the Sithanen Report on electoral reform of January 2012 also did not make any mention of political funding;



- there was also no mention of political financing in the Consultation Paper on electoral reform of March 2014. In the Government Programme 2005-2010, there was no specific mention of political financing;
- the Government Programme of 2012-2015 in fact barely refers to the financial of political parties;
- the Government Programme of 2015-2019, of course, clearly mentions legislation for the financing of political parties. Government, in fact, did come up, as I said, with a Political Financing Bill, and
- the Government Programme 2020-2024 does mention that a new Bill on the financing of political parties will be introduced in the National Assembly.

**Mr Uteem:** For the sake of transparency, since we are talking about financing of political parties, is the hon. Prime Minister prepared to table a list of all donors to the MSM including Mr Lee Shim who said he has paid him Rs10 m. and...

**The Prime Minister:** Mr?

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Lee Shim! He said on radio that he paid you Rs10 m. And a list of all donors who enabled you to construct Sun Trust.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member, don't mention the names of people.

**Mr Uteem:** Can you give a list of all donors who enabled the MSM to build the Sun Trust and a list of all donors who financed your electoral campaign for the last election?

**The Prime Minister:** What about all the donors who have provided substantial amounts to the MMM? We are proud we have received donations from the private sector. We have a headquarters for the party. You have received donations for your party and I wonder who has pocketed this amount. You do not even have a headquarters, what are you talking about?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** And if you want ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** If you want a list, we all know that, apart from pocketing...

*(Interruptions)*

Can you imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of that party - *laissez-moi peut être parler en français pour qu'ils comprennent un peu, ou mieux ce que j'ai dit avant - dénonce la BAI d'opérer un Ponzi Scheme. Imaginez ! Et puis, tout d'un coup lorsqu'il fait l'alliance avec le parti Travailliste, il accepte un chèque de R 10 million de ce Ponzi Scheme !*

**An hon. Member :** La honte ! La honte !

**The Prime Minister:** Comment pouvez-vous qualifier cela ? Et en plus, qui ne connaît pas Monsieur G. ! Vous connaissez...

*(Interruptions)*

Parlez des courses, parlez de l'argent que vous avez reçu des *bookmakers*.

*(Interruptions)*

Pourquoi vous ne parlez pas de l'argent que vous avez reçu de la mafia des courses de certains que je ne nommerai pas ? Et qui ne connaît pas une autre personnalité, Monsieur G ? Je ne sais pas s'il est un membre de votre parti, mais en tout cas, il a collaboré à l'élaboration de votre programme gouvernemental. Ça on le sait ! Il a participé à plusieurs réunions dont des réunions à Rivière Noire. Il a participé, et il a aidé à la campagne du MMM.

*(Interruptions)*

Oui, mais je vous pose la question. Allez demander à votre Leader comment il a financé le MMM ! Allez demander à votre Leader ! Votre Leader n'est pas là aujourd'hui. Regardez derrière vous, demandez à l'honorable Ameer Meea comment il a financé !

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** Trésorier !

**The Prime Minister:** L'honorable Ameer Meea pourrait vous dire.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Nuckcheddy, last question!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Point of order!

**Mr Speaker:** On a point of order?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, my name has been mentioned by the Prime Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is going on in this House? Let me make my point! Let me make my point!

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me make ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Please both sides of the House order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Make your point.

**Mr Ameer Meea :** I can assure the House including the Prime Minister that whatever donation the MMM has received and I will ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can bring a law with back dated effects seven years or ten years for all parties concerned, we, the MMM, shall deposit our bank statements in this House! Shall deposit our bank statements in this House!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, please, please. Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

This is not a point of order but I allow you to make your case. Okay! So, last question.

**Mr Nuckcheddy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In his reply, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that he is coming with a Bill in due course and now we have heard of donations, pocketing and everything. So, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if in the Bill that he intends to bring in this House, there will be any provisions to prevent political leaders like we

have seen in the past taking the donation money and keeping it in their personal safe together with their tablets and pills?

**The Prime Minister:** This is the very purpose why on this side of the House, we want to regulate ...

**Mr Juman:** *Remplace Gobin!*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** We want to regulate the financing of political parties because it has become public knowledge that we have a former Prime Minister who has, in fact, been not only using political party funds for his own use, but he has also drawn from the official bank account of a political party to transfer some ...

**An hon. Member:** *La honte! La honte!*

**Mr Mohamed:** On a point of order, Standing Orders do not allow any Member to make accusations against members or people who are not within this Assembly. On top of it, the hon. Prime Minister knows very well that whatever he is saying are gratuitous allegations for matters that have never been proved before any court of law. Therefore, he is himself passing judgment against a Party who is not present here. That would be in violation of fairness which the hon. Prime Minister as a legal person should know better than everyone else. So, therefore, I appeal to you, Sir, and the hon. Prime Minister since we are all wishing to be very fair in our approach, not to proceed along that line. I am being very fair.

**The Prime Minister:** May I reply, Mr Speaker, Sir? Is it not public knowledge that a coffer was seized at the residence of the former Prime Minister and that in that coffer or those coffers, there had been loads of foreign currencies and Mauritian Rupees and he was assisted, if I can remind you, by your late father who himself said ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, wait! Wait! Wait!

**The Prime Minister:** ... who himself said ...

**Mr Mohamed:** It's not to give an explanation; it's for you to rule.

**Mr Speaker:** Wait! Don't give me orders. I know what I am doing. I know what I am doing. I listened to your point of order.

**Mr Mohamed:** I have the impression that you forgot.

**Mr Speaker:** Please continue!

**The Prime Minister:** ... who made a comment to say that –

*“mo pa kapav fer mirak, mo pa kapav defann l'indéfendable, mo pa kapav fer mirak.”*

So, what I am saying is already known to the public, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am not making any accusation against anyone. These are facts.

**Mr Speaker:** I listened carefully to your point of order as the Prime Minister had the opportunity of giving his point and I will rule on that at a later stage. So, now time is over!

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Before we move to PQ time, let me announce that PQs B/113 and B/117 have been withdrawn. Now, you may proceed.

#### **MONTAGNE JACQUOT WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT - FAULTS**

**(No. B/124) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if faults have been detected thereat and, if so, indicate –

(a) the nature thereof, and

(b) since when.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to PQs B/124 and B/174 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant located at Pointe aux Sables was commissioned in 2007 mainly to cater for industrial effluent and municipal wastewater coming from the regions of western Port Louis, Grande Rivière, Coromandel, Pointe aux Sables and La Tour Koenig. The Plant is

designed to treat 48,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wastewater daily with an average flow of 36,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day and to use advanced primary and sludge treatment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Plant has been in operation for the last 15 years and the electromechanical equipment have undergone major wear and tear and have exceeded service life in some cases, mainly due to being in contact with industrial wastewaters and environmental conditions. The current treatment process includes screening followed by partial sludge removal in a contact tank. The sludge from the contact tank is then carted away. The effluent is discharged in the ocean at a distance of 835 m and at a depth of 35 m below sea-level. I am informed that the effluent discharge meets ocean discharge standard.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the following faults were reported in 2018 in respect of which, remedial works have been/are being undertaken –

- (i) the chemical building of the water line;
- (ii) the sludge system of the sludge line, and
- (iii) the sludge dewatering System.

The remaining components of the system are operational. For years 2020, 2021 and 2022, despite the non-operation of certain electromechanical equipment at the Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant, the preliminary treatment has proved its efficiency as test results have demonstrated more than 99% percentile compliance to ocean discharge parameters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, upon detection of the faults, the WMA has enlisted the services of Consultant Veolia (Mtius) Ltd in 2018, following a bidding exercise, for the refurbishment and improvement of the operation and maintenance of Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Consultant submitted its report in 2019 and recommended the upgrading of equipment and infrastructure through a Refurbishment Plan in 4 phases.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that action has been initiated accordingly and works have been ongoing on several fronts following the submission of the refurbishment plan. I wish to outline the following main measures taken –

- a) Civil works in an amount of Rs6 m. and odour abatement works amounting to Rs4.5 m. have been successfully completed during Financial Year 2020/2021.

- b) Refurbishment works at Inlet Works and Primary clarifiers are ongoing under a contract awarded in April 2022 for a sum of Rs20.48 m. Works are expected to be completed by end of April 2023.
- c) Works with regard to sludge re-engineering have started in December 2022 and are expected to be completed in August 2023.
- d) A bidding exercise for the Sludge Dewatering Units will be launched in May 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the House that necessary action is being taken by the Waste Water Management Authority to refurbish and upgrade Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant while maintaining all environmental norms.

It is also worthy to highlight that for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, the test results of effluent discharge effected by the accredited Waste Water Management Authority Lab which is certified to ISO Standards have been compliant with standards for ocean discharge. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, in the last Lagoonal Monitoring Report, have not reported any non-compliance in sea water quality at the sea outfall of the Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to the above, I am tabling the test results from Quantilab, an accredited independent laboratory in respect of such parameters as Biochemical Oxygen Demand, Chemical Oxygen Demand as well as Total Suspended Solids on a sample of treated effluent taken on 30 March 2023. It will be noted that all the parameters are well within acceptable limits and are in compliance with the Standards of Effluent Discharge into the Ocean Regulation made under the Environment Protection Act.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Thank you. I know the hon. Minister went for a visit yesterday for about one hour and would he confirm to the House that the Plant is not operational efficiently since 2018? Can I ask him whether, the electromechanical equipment that he referred to in his reply are in fact the clarifiers without which – if they are not functional – no sludge cakes are produced, those same cakes that were disposed to Mare Chicose and without this, also no chlorination of effluent water is done before discharge to the sea as part of the cleaning process

and as a result of this, the damage to the environment over the period of 5 years could be worse than a silent Wakashio.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Not at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. Yes, I visited the site yesterday because I wanted to take stock of the situation before replying to the questions put to me by the two hon. Members.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been very transparent in my reply and I have given reports that I have in my possession with regard to tests that have been carried out by the Wastewater Management Authority, by an independent lab, by the Ministry of Environment and also by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and all the tests that have been carried out have confirmed that the results are in compliance with the standards for effluent discharge into the ocean, that is, under the Environment Protection Act. I have the figures with me and I am very comfortable with the figures that I have in my possession, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have tabled the results of tests carried out by an independent lab on 30 March which confirm what I am saying. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. David!

**Mr David:** Merci, M. le président. Dans un *statement* fait il y a deux ans, par le ministre des Utilités Publiques, c'était le 30 mars 2021, suite à un point que j'avais soulevé à l'ajournement, le ministre avait indiqué qu'il s'agissait effectivement d'un déversement d'eaux usées, non-traitées, en mer en raison d'une situation d'urgence qui était due à des travaux à la station de pompage de Pointe aux Sables qui, je le rappelle, se situe à un endroit différent de la station de traitement de Montagne Jacquot. À la lumière de la visite en mer que je dois dire que l'honorable Osman Mahomed et moi-même avons effectuée il y a quelques jours, est-ce que le ministre souhaiterait revenir sur la déclaration qu'il a faite à la Chambre il y a deux ans ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Non, pas du tout. Pourquoi ? Je ne comprends pas pourquoi je dois retourner sur ce que j'avais dit dans cette Chambre. *What I said was correct, I do not need to amend anything. Do not mix issues. We are talking of two different facilities, one located at Pointe aux Sables, which is no longer discharging water in the ocean, and Montagne Jacquot where we are still discharging water in the ocean.*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!



**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Yes...

**Mr Lesjongard:** You should get the right information before putting questions to this House.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am quite puzzled by the fact that the main electromechanical facility there, which is the clarifier, is not working properly. It is faulty and the Minister is saying that the water is deemed fit to be thrown to the sea. I am quite puzzled by this.

**Mr Lesjongard:** I am not at all puzzled!

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Can I ask him...

**Mr Lesjongard:** Because I have results with me. I have results that confirm what I am saying. You can check the results, then, if you are puzzled, I will understand.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Firstly, there is foul smell at sea.

**Mr Speaker:** Put your question!

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Can I ask the Minister, being given that we are talking about 36,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water over a period of 5 years, containing untreated industrial effluent, containing raw sewer that has been thrown to the sea, whether divers can be sent down to examine the repercussion of this on the fauna and flora down there?

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, we do not need to send divers, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have entities that can look after what you are saying. I confirmed here in this House that there have been regular checks by the bodies concerned, that is, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Blue Economy and by independent lab to test the quality of the water. I have stated that the quality of the water meets effluent discharge under the Environment Protection Act. What do we need more?

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** If you say you are happy with the results, hon. Minister, we can leave the situation as it is. You do not need to do all the work that you have done.

**Mr Speaker:** No, put a question! This is not a question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, we cannot.

**Mr Speaker:** This is a discussion. Okay, move to next question! Minister, please! Move to the next question. Where have we reached? I believe question B/125 has been withdrawn.

Now, we move to the question of hon. Fourth Member of Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, hon. Juman!

#### **BEAU BASSIN-ROSE HILL – PAVEMENTS – SURVEY & FINDINGS**

(No. B/125) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the pavements in Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, information as to if a survey has been commissioned to assess the state thereof and, if so, indicate the findings and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION – BOARD REVOCATION, GRANTS & SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE**

(No. B/126) **Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Football Association, he will state –

- (a) why the board thereof was –
  - (i) revoked, indicating if all procedures were followed in relation thereto, and
  - (ii) reinstated;
- (b) if the grants voted in the last budget will be allocated thereto and to other clubs, and
- (c) if sports infrastructure will be put at the disposal thereof.

**Mr Toussaint:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to PQ B/126 and PQ B/193 at the same time. I am seizing this opportunity to provide the House with a chronological order of events with regard to the setting up of the Temporary Committee of the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) and ultimately to its dissolution sometime later, following concerns raised by the Mauritius Olympic Committee (MOC).

As far back as August 2021, my Ministry informed the MFA that following grievances received at my Ministry regarding the prevailing situation at the MFA with regard to good governance issues, my Ministry decided to withhold all support to the MFA.

Furthermore, upon request from my Ministry, the MFA failed to submit a comprehensive action plan to develop football in Mauritius. Despite all the efforts made by my Ministry and meetings held with the MFA, it was observed that the situation had not improved with respect to governance issues, while section 5 of the Sports Act 2016, stipulates, *inter alia*, that –

“every National Sports Federation shall uphold and operate on the principles of good governance, transparency, democracy, fairness and non-discrimination.”

In addition, the Registrar of Associations (ROA) also requested the MFA to apply for the registration of the amendment of its rules, failing which action would be initiated against the MFA under section 15(1) (c) of the ROA Act which deals with the cancellation of the registration of associations.

In a letter dated 28 December 2022 which the ROA addressed to the MFA and copied to my Ministry, the ROA informed that the complete amended MFA rules could not be registered owing to shortcomings identified therein.

Despite various working sessions that the ROA had with the MFA, the latter still failed to remedy these shortcomings.

On Friday 24 February 2023, I had a phone conversation personally with the President of the Mauritius Olympic Committee (MOC) to inform him of the above issues being encountered with the MFA and that there was a likelihood to favour the setting up of a Temporary Committee for the MFA, as a measure of last resort to avoid the de-registration of the MFA by the ROA, as the national federation for football.

On Monday 27 February 2023, the MOC was invited to participate in a consultative meeting chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry regarding the proposal for the setting up of a Temporary Committee. The MOC delegated its Assistant Secretary to attend the said meeting.

In the light of the above and pursuant to section 9(9) of the Sports Act, on 02 March 2023, the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry dissolved the Managing Committee of the MFA

and set up a Temporary Committee of the MFA whose mandate was, *inter alia*, to amend the rules of the Mauritius Football Association with a view to aligning them with the provisions of the Sports Act 2016.

As was the case for past Temporary Committees, for example, judo and boxing, set up by my Ministry for an Olympic sports discipline, it was decided to invite the MOC to delegate a representative to form part of the Temporary Committee.

Another consultative meeting scheduled for Friday 03 March 2023 by my Ministry with MOC could not be held due to the unavailability of its President.

Another meeting scheduled with the MOC for Monday 06 March 2023 did not materialise. In a letter dated 05 March 2023, the MOC informed that following a meeting of its Extraordinary Executive Committee, all its members agreed unanimously not to participate in that meeting scheduled for 06 March 2023.

During the course of another consultative meeting, held on Tuesday 07 March 2023, the representatives of the MOC raised, with officers of my Ministry, several points of concern, relating namely to –

- (a) the possibility of FIFA banning Mauritius in international football competitions, and in the eventuality of the MFA becoming compliant to local legislation, re-affiliation to the FIFA might be still problematic if MFA failed to respect the rules of its international federation, and
- (b) the eventuality of the International Olympic Committee applying international sanctions against Mauritius in all sports disciplines might be a reality.

The representatives of the MOC, thus, made an appeal to my Ministry to re-consider its position regarding the Temporary Committee and to find a solution acceptable to all the parties concerned.

The representatives of the MOC, thus, made an appeal to my Ministry to re-consider its position regarding the Temporary Committee and to find a solution acceptable to all the parties concerned.

The representatives of the MOC reiterated their concerns during a meeting held under my chairmanship on 13 March 2023.

In a letter dated 14 March 2023, the MOC expressly stated their concerns about the possible suspension of Mauritius from all Olympic sports disciplines and proposed that the Sports Act 2016 be reviewed.

In this context and taking into consideration that many of our athletes are actively preparing to participate in several forthcoming regional and international competitions, namely the Indian Ocean Islands Games, Francophonie Games, Youth Commonwealth Games, All Africa Games, Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, my Ministry could not afford to take the risk of an international suspension in all Olympic sports disciplines.

On 17 March 2023, a decision was, therefore, taken to dissolve the Temporary Committee of the MFA and to re-instate the Managing Committee of the MFA. Two weeks ago, my Ministry has had preliminary consultations with the National Sports Federations dealing with team sports, where they made several proposals regarding amendments to be brought to the Sports Act 2016. Their proposals are now being examined and legal advice will be sought accordingly.

I would like to inform the House that no correspondence was exchanged between my Ministry and the FIFA, in relation to the Temporary Committee. As for the correspondences exchanged with the MOC, the latter has been consulted and has no objection to same being tabled.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the football season 2022-2023 is nearing its completion by this week, the issue of allocating grants to the football clubs does not arise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 31 March 2023, my Ministry had already informed the MFA that my Ministry has no objection to the MFA using stadiums falling under our purview for training by clubs and competitions to be organised by the MFA.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am hereby tabling a series of correspondences exchanged between my Ministry and the MOC in relation to the Temporary Committee of the MFA. Thank you.

**Mr Juman:** Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Minister, you just said there was consultation with the MOC and as per Sports Act Section 9 C (ii) –

“(...) where appropriate, appoint, after consultation with the Mauritius Olympic Committee, a temporary committee to manage the affairs of the National Sports Federation (...).”

Hon. Minister, can you inform the House whether a correspondence was sent to the MOC to invite them for consultation and when the consultation was held and its outcome?

**Mr Toussaint:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will repeat two items of my main reply where I said on Friday 24 February 2023, firstly I had a conversation personally with the President of Mauritius Olympic Committee to inform him that we are going about to set up the temporary committee. On Monday 27 February 2023, the MOC was invited to participate in a consultative meeting chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry. The Mauritius Olympic Committee delegated its Assistant Secretary to attend the said meeting.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, ce n'est un secret pour personne que le niveau de notre football à Maurice est au plus bas alors que d'autres pays de la région progressent à pas de géant. Puisque la *MFA* a failli dans sa tâche, l'honorable Toussaint, en tant que ministre des Sports, peut-il nous dire ce qu'il préconise afin que notre football retrouve son lustre d'antan ?

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, je suis entièrement d'accord avec l'honorable membre que c'est vrai que nous avons un souci au niveau de notre football puisque ça fait assez longtemps que nous n'avons pas remporté de victoire dans différentes compétitions régionales ou africaines. Récemment, les jeunes ont fait montre un peu de leur qualité en ce qu'il s'agit de *futsal*, les filles aussi et nous avons demandé à la *MFA*, j'ai dit ça quelque part dans ma réponse, de venir de l'avant avec un plan pour revoir notre football et un plan sur le long terme. Je prends l'exemple de l'équipe de France qui avait remporté la coupe du monde en 1998 et ce n'est qu'en 2018 qu'ils ont remporté de nouveau la coupe du monde. Cela leur a pris 20 ans après leur première victoire pour remporter encore une fois la coupe du monde.

Donc nous avons demandé à la *MFA* un plan long terme - 10, 15, 20 ans par rapport à notre football. Ils sont venus de l'avant avec une proposition que les techniciens de mon ministère ont examinée et nous ne sommes toujours pas satisfaits avec ce qu'ils ont proposé. Certainement, nous allons continuer ce genre de rencontre et ce genre de dialogue jusqu'à ce que les deux parties, que ce soit la *MFA*, le ministère et aussi les clubs, allons dire un peu tous ceux concernés par le monde du football, nous soyons d'accord que ce plan qui viendra va nous emmener vers

des sommets, vers des résultats un peu plus glorieux. Restez rassuré, M. le président. Donc nous allons travailler et nous allons continuer à mettre la pression sur la *MFA* pour qu'il vienne avec quelque chose de plus réalisable.

**Mr Doolub:** Merci, M. le président. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous confirmer la visite prochaine du président de la FIFA à Maurice ? Merci.

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, même si la question de l'honorable membre ne fait pas partie de la question principale. Oui, il y a eu une correspondance. Je n'ai pas dit oui qu'il vient. Oui, il y a une correspondance de la part de la MFA nous informant que le président de la FIFA ferait une visite à Maurice. Cependant, de mémoire hier nous avons reçu une autre correspondance de la part de la MFA nous faisant part que *at the end* le président de la FIFA ne viendrait pas à Maurice.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, la possibilité que le *Sports Act 2016* soit amendé afin d'offrir un statut spécial à la MFA par rapport à l'organisation de l'élection de son comité exécutif a été évoquée dans les médias et ailleurs. Le ministre de ce fait peut-il nous dire si son ministère compte aller dans cette direction et quel est désormais le statut officiel de la MFA auprès de son ministère ?

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, donc, je répète ce qui a été dit dans ma réponse. Nous avons tenu des réunions avec toutes les fédérations, *team sport* comme on dit, donc *basketball*, *handball* etc. parce que nous voulions entendre de la part de ces autres fédérations si pour eux aussi, il y a un souci par rapport à notre *Sports Act* et donc éventuellement s'il y a amendements, ce serait pour tous ces *team sports* ; ce ne serait pas nécessairement un amendement spécialement pour le football. Nous continuons à travailler et comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, il y a eu des consultations qui ont été faites et il y a eu des propositions qui sont revenues vers nous au ministère et maintenant les techniciens sont en train de mettre un peu d'ordre dedans. Éventuellement, donc ce sera aux personnes légales, c'est-à-dire le *SLO* de venir nous guider quels sont les amendements que nous pouvons apporter.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Juman:** Hon. Minister, you mentioned that the President of FIFA is not coming to Mauritius. In a correspondence sent to the MFA and to your Ministry also, they said –

“The FIFA President will not travel to Mauritius due to the late answer from your Ministry.”

And hon. Minister, in a letter addressed to the MFA by the FIFA, on 08 March, despite many attempts the MFA and the FIFA made to seek dialogue with the Ministry in order to find a constructive solution which you mentioned earlier that would be acceptable to all parties concerned. In this respect, we note from FIFA that our letter dated 20 December 2022 addressed to the Minister and the PS has so far remained unanswered. So, Minister, which is which? You want to engage dialogue with FIFA and MFA and you are not responding positively to meet them and discuss. Which is which?

**Mr Toussaint:** M. le président, donc je vais essayer de répondre à deux questions dans une question. Premièrement, je n’ai pas la lettre de la MFA avec moi là et certainement, je ne pense pas que nous avons voulu expressément répondre de façon tardive à la MFA. Nous aurions bien souhaité avoir le président de la FIFA ici à Maurice pour que, au moins, les clubs qui ont beaucoup de choses à en redire, puissent le rencontrer et emmener leurs doléances directement à celui qui dirige cette belle discipline. Si pour x raison le président ne vient pas, bein *let’s hope* que *very soon he will be able to make a visit to Mauritius so that all parties concerned would be able to voice out what they have to say about our local football.*

Je ne sais pas si je me trompe ; veuillez m’excuser en avance, M. le président, mais, je sens dans la voix de l’honorable membre, j’entends comme un genre de plaidoyer envers la MFA. J’espère que je me trompe. Il y a eu beaucoup de correspondances qui ont été envoyées depuis belle lurette, M. le président. Je n’ai malheureusement pas toutes ces correspondances avec moi. Depuis belle lurette, depuis 2021 si je ne me trompe pas, moi-même personnellement, j’ai déjà eu une conversation téléphonique avec le responsable de la région d’Afrique pour expliquer les soucis qu’il y a actuellement dans notre football locale et pour inviter les personnes concernées à venir. Récemment, donc l’année dernière, il me semble qu’il y avait deux responsables de la FIFA Afrique qui étaient à Maurice, qui ont rencontré le directeur des sports qui a expliqué tous les problèmes que nous sommes en train d’avoir mais malheureusement, du côté de la FIFA, *the answer was only one sided.*

Alors n’essayez pas de venir jeter la pierre sur moi s’il vous plait. Merci.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, the House is advised that ...



*(Interruptions)*

Order!

PQs B/125, B/141, B/151, B/153, B/156, B/158, B/184, B/185, B/187, B/197 and B/202 have been withdrawn.

At this stage hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour.

*At 1.21 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 3.01 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Please be seated!

Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

**NATIONAL SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH POLICY 2022 –  
IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/127) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the National Sexual Reproductive Health Policy 2022, he will state the work progress in the implementation thereof.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on 16 September 2022, that is, some six months back, the Government approved the elaboration of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy 2022 and the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Implementation Plan 2022–2027. The objectives of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy are to empower people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, ensure that their sexual and reproductive health rights are respected and protected as well as improve access to a comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive healthcare and treatment services across all life stages.

The development of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy provides a unique opportunity to define common vision and mission, set goals and objectives, identify priorities, assess emerging issues and challenges, areas for action and to elaborate a strategic plan to strengthen the health system delivery and to focus on curative, preventive and health promotion aspects of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the launching of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy 2022 and the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Implementation Plan 2022–2027 in October 2022, the following activities have been initiated by my Ministry –

1. Setting up of a National Sexual and Reproductive Health Steering Committee at the level of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, chaired by the Senior Chief Executive;
2. Setting up of Sub-Committees in respect to priority areas identified in the plan;
3. Holding of Awareness Campaigns across the island;
4. Setting up of a Community Sexual Health Clinic;
5. Continuous Professional Development approved training and capacity building of health professionals on topics such as preconception care, modern methods of contraception, maternal health, child health and breastfeeding, Sexually Transmitted Infections and infertility;
6. Provision of emergency contraception on a 24-hour basis in regional hospitals, and
7. Broadcasting of TV and radio programs on Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Furthermore, my Ministry is working on the modalities for the implementation of the following activities –

- (a) Counselling of postpartum contraception in postnatal wards on a daily basis;
- (b) Reintroduction of home visits by Midwives and Community Health Care Officers;
- (c) Introduction of postnatal clinics in primary health centres;
- (d) Allowing for male participation during consultations that is, antenatal, family planning and others, and
- (e) Sensitisation sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health in the community, Social Welfare Centres and schools and tertiary centres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is also in the process of reviewing the Maternal and Child Health Handbook to ensure continuum of care. Consultations on the introduction of Child Birth Preparation Classes in primary health centres, social centres and women wellness centres have already been initiated.

Additionally, to enhance and improve sexual and reproductive health of the Mauritian population, my Ministry is working in close collaboration with other Ministries as well as with Non-Governmental Organisations.

In this context, a workshop on Mapping Sexual and Reproductive Health Services by various stakeholders will be held in the coming weeks. This will enable us to standardise the level of care of Sexual and Reproductive Health care and training.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Luchmun Roy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the sexually transmitted infections which have been mentioned by the hon. Minister, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the measures being taken to reduce the transmission and impact of the sexually transmitted infections in the Republic of Mauritius? Thank you.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to reducing the transmission and impact of sexually transmitted infections in the Republic of Mauritius – now, on a general note, more than one million people worldwide are infected with Sexually Transmitted Infections each day; the majority of which are asymptomatic and every year, 374 million people contract an STI.

Now, in Mauritius the main clinics dealing with STIs are the skin clinics, that is, the dermatology clinics at the regional hospitals. Since the last few years, 2016, STIs cases have increased from 339 in 2016 to 497 cases in 2021. More of these concerns are cases of Syphilis that were recorded among pregnant women attending antenatal care clinics with the percentage positive rate of 4.3% for 2021. In Rodrigues Island as well, there is a rise in STIs from 35 cases in 2015 to 151 cases in 2021. So, these are the figures of another sexually transmitted disease called ‘Gonorrhoea’ 35 cases and 116 cases of Syphilis for 2021. This is according to the Health Statistics Report.

What the Ministry is doing in order to reduce the transmission and impact of these infections is included in the plan, which includes measures to prevent STIs, increase educational and awareness intervention in schools and regular organisation of awareness days, promotion and wider distribution of male and female condoms, improve access to screening, not only in dermatology departments as previously, but also in antenatal consultations, National Day Care Centres For Immune-Compromised, Occupational Health Unit - very important because we do screen for foreign workers and at the level of primary healthcare: Banyan Community Health Centres working together with some NGOs. So, all these are being done and we have already completed a Chlamydia prevalence study within one year. All these are the actions taken especially to reduce the transmission and impact of sexually transmitted infections.

**Mrs Luchmun Roy:** Thank you, hon. Minister. We appreciate the effort being done. However, we have taken note that there is a rise of teenage pregnancy, the cases of teenage pregnancy *sont en hausse* as we say it. Can the hon. Minister tell us about what is being done, what his Ministry is doing to improve the sexual and reproductive health in the Republic of Mauritius, especially for our teenagers? Thank you.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of cases of teenage pregnancy being reported, it is also good to mention some global figures. In 2021, according to UNICEF, an estimate of 14% of adolescent girls and young women gave birth before the age of 18, 14%. In Mauritius, the number of life births among adolescents has declined significantly over the years from 1,053 cases in 2017 to 858 cases in 2021. So, this is the decreasing trend and I would like to thank the Ministry of Gender and Equality also for their effort in reducing the teenage pregnancy.

In the same year, adolescent population was 170,000 resulting in 5% pregnancies among minors. So, it is very important to note these figures. These majority of cases occur in adolescents of 16 years or older and to prevent teenage pregnancy and improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls, the 2022 National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Implementation Programme identifies priority areas to address the sexual and reproductive health of children and adolescents in and out of school. My Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, conducts awareness campaigns at the school level on sexual and reproductive health.

Outside the school, for young people not scholarised with the Ministry of Gender, as parents of the primary educators of children, my department also runs awareness programmes on sexual and parental education with parents together with other Ministries. Minors over the age of 16, the age of sexual majority, have access to contraception and advice about their sexuality. Minors under the age of 16, who need personalised sexual health advice in school or with care givers, the Ministry ensures that pregnant adolescent girls receive appropriate and confidential prenatal care without prejudice and receive all the necessary social assistance through the Ministry of Social Security. They also receive support from the Ministry of Social Security on necessary multidisciplinary medical, social, psychological support.

A teenage health plan including sexual health component will be soon coming in the upcoming months. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mrs Luchmun Roy:** Thank you, hon. Minister. I do not know if you have the answer to this question, but I would like you a question with regard to the fertility rate in Mauritius. Can the hon. Minister provide us with further information, if ever he has it in his possession right now, about the fertility rate in Mauritius and the National Population Policy of 2020? Can you please elaborate if ever you have the answer right now, because I know that it does not really pertain to the main question? Thank you.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of fertility rate is very important because it is the replacement of the population which should be 2.1 children per couple. So, this is the guidance, having a replacement rate of 2.1 children per couple. In 2021, that is two years back, the total fertility rate dropped down to 1.37. That means that the number of people getting to advanced age compared to the live birth is a total imbalance. So, in this context, the Government has established an Interdepartmental Committee on Demographic Policy chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun. There have been several meetings for the last two years and hopefully the Committee will come up with some strategic direction and the Policy that we will be waiting for the coming month.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

#### **MFRS – STATION FIRE OFFICER QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

**(No. B/128) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the Station Fire Officer Qualifying Examination, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, information as to if same has been cancelled and, if so, give reasons therefor, indicating the number of candidates having participated therein and number thereof who were eligible as per advertisement issued on 22 December 2022.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the last Station Officers

Qualifying Exam was conducted on 30 April 2022 by the Disciplined Force Service Commission. On the 22 December 2022, the Disciplined Force Service Commission had informed the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that it has decided to cancel the whole exercise regarding the on-going qualifying examination for the course of Station Fire Officer due to the fact that some candidates who took part in the written qualifying exam were not eligible as they did not reckon 5 years' service in a substantive capacity in the grade of fire fighters.

Information regarding the number of candidates who have participated to the examination and the number of candidates who were eligible to sit for the examination has been sought from the Disciplines Forces and the latter has informed that same could not be disclosed.

**Mr R. Duval:** Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell the House whether Mrs A. K.'s daughter of the high official of Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services was eligible as per criteria laid out in the advertisement issued on 22 December 2022?

**Dr. Husnoo:** The Ministry of Local Government does not look after the eligibility of the candidate. All the information and all the application are forwarded to the Discipline Forces for assessment and further interview or whatever.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

#### **PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – TAX REMOVAL - CONSIDERATION**

**(No. B/129) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the price of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if consideration will be given for the removal of some of the taxes from the structure thereof, in particular, the Rs2 for the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since 01 July 2022, no contribution towards COVID-19 vaccine has been collected on the price structure of Mogas and Gasoil.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question also said the removal of some of the taxes.

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Member would appreciate that any change in the price structure will have to obtain the assent of Cabinet since it is a policy decision which the Government has to take.

**Mr Bodha:** Can I ask the hon. Minister, considering the fact that there has been a considerable fall in the price of the barrel of petroleum products from USD 120 to USD 80, is the STC considering a fall in prices in the days to come? When is the next exercise expected?

**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the PPC is meant to meet in May and of course, there are several factors that are taken into consideration in determining the price of Mogas and Gas oil. But I can tell you right now that the petroleum prices on the international market are very volatile.

**Mr Bodha:** May I continue? Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the amount collected for each additional rupee for each litre of diesel and petrol?

**Mr Callichurn:** Unfortunately, I do not have the figure but I can tell you right now, the amount collected as at 28 February 2023 stood at Rs2.5 billion. On the contrary, the deficit in the subsidy account as at 30 March 2023 for Mogas stood at Rs570 m.

**Mr Bodha:** One last question. The STC uses a rate for the Dollar, which is Rs45.35/US\$. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the STC can consider having a special rate from the Bank of Mauritius so that we can have a stable exercise?

**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Speaker, Sir, STC, like any other trader, buy at the same rate with the Bank of Mauritius. Of course, if there is the possibility of buying at a specific rate, we will consider.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/139, B/145, B/159, B/175, B/176, B/183, B/186, B/167, B/198, B/201 and B/206 have been withdrawn.

Next question!

### **SILVER BANK LIMITED - ULTIMATE BENEFICIAL OWNERS**

**(No. B/130) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the ultimate beneficial owners of Silver Bank Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the –

(a) names thereof;

- (b) percentage of direct or indirect shareholdings thereof in Silver Bank Limited;
- (c) banking experience thereof, and
- (d) if they are related to P. G.

**The Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Mr S. Bholah):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bank of Mauritius is required under section 26 of the Bank of Mauritius Act to maintain the confidentiality of information gathered in the performance of its duties. Hence, any information pertaining to the ultimate beneficial owners of SBL is confidential, and the Bank of Mauritius is prevented by the Bank of Mauritius Act from disclosing any information relating to the affairs of the Bank or any of its customers.

**Mr Uteem:** The question I am asking has nothing to do with the affairs of the Bank or the customers. It relates to who owns a bank which is taking deposit from Mauritians. Under section 7 of the Banking Act, there is a duty on the Central Bank to ensure that the shareholder is a fit and proper person. So, this is why we have to know who the shareholder is so that we can ascertain whether that shareholder is a fit and proper person.

**Mr Bholah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to comply with the provisions of the Bank of Mauritius Act and I stand guided by it.

**Mr Uteem:** I know he is not the substantive Minister, but at least, has he got any information from the Bank of Mauritius that Silver Bank Limited has complied with the Banking Act, in terms of the applicant and the Directors having sufficient experience in banking matters?

**Mr Bholah:** Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have any information pertaining to this question.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**SAUDI ARABIA - UMRAH PILGRIMAGE - VISA**

**(No. B/131) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Mauritian citizens proceeding for Umrah Pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) charges levied by the Saudi authorities for the issuing of this type of visa;



- (b) number of Mauritian citizens having travelled to Saudi Arabia for the Umrah Pilgrimage since the 12 March 2022 to date, and
- (c) charges claimed by local licensed tour operators for the obtention of the visa.

**Mr Teeluck:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed by the Consulate of Saudi Arabia in Mauritius, that the Saudi Government charges for Umrah visa for Mauritius are approximately 300 Saudi Riyals. I am also informed that there are other associated costs and charges, including, *inter alia*, medical insurance fees and online processing fees which may inflate the cost for issuing of a visa to approximately 875 Saudi Riyals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am apprised that Umrah Pilgrimage is open all the year round without any quota restriction. Given that Umrah visas are issued directly by Saudi authorities, we do not have the exact figures. However, we have approached the Saudi authorities to obtain information on the number of visas issued for Umrah for Mauritian residents. As per the figures obtained from Statistics Mauritius, 17,734 Mauritian residents have travelled to Saudi Arabia since March 2022 up to March 2023.

Regarding part (c) of question, I am informed by the ICC that the local fees charged by travel agents for obtention of visa ranged between Rs700 to Rs1,000 per person.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The hon. Minister mentioned an average quote of 300 Riyals to 875 Riyals. I wish to point out that the same sort of fee is being claimed in the United Kingdom and other countries to approximately 100 pounds. There is an excessive mark-up in the processing of visas by certain tour operators in this country. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can seek with the Saudi authorities that the ICC, which already deals with Hajj visas, can also be given a MoFA licence for issuing visa for Umrah, which will ensure a competitive approach.

**Mr Teeluck:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very difficult for me to react on this question or on the issue of whether ICC should deal with the organisation of Umrah as it is doing for the organisation of Hajj. For years now, the ICC has been organising and facilitating the pilgrimage of Hajj. But, we also do know that when it comes to Umrah, this pilgrimage is open all year round, there is no quota restriction, as I mentioned. So, it is very difficult for me at this stage to

react on the issue of whether the ICC should deal with Umrah Pilgrimage. Certainly, this is something that we can take up with the Board of the ICC and see if it is feasible.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. 7,000 of Mauritian Muslim pilgrims, Rs1 billion in the industry, hundreds of complaints against agencies. What will you please do, hon. Minister, in your capacity to ensure that these pilgrims are not being milked up and subjected to a lot of problems when they go for Umrah pilgrimage?

**Mr Teeluck:** Definitely! But, we have to understand something, Mr Speaker, Sir. Local travel agents are firstly granted licences by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be able to organise Umrah Pilgrimage. So, it is not that any travel agency in Mauritius has that mandate. They have to be licensed by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah; that is the first step. Second step, it is only those who have received that licence who have the authority to apply for a visa for Umrah.

So, before either the Ministry or the ICC is able to take a call or able to step in, this whole process which is today, independent of the Ministry and the ICC, we will, of course, have to seek or consult the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia.

So, at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can only put information that has been gathered from the Saudi Authorities to the House but when it comes to whether any action needs to be taken, we will, of course, need proper consultation with the Saudi Authorities.

**Dr. Aumeer:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. You said it's very difficult and only licensed agencies are able to arrange and organise Umrah packages and fortunately, maybe I understand your position. Anybody, and I mention anybody in this country, given he is a Muslim, can organise Umrah for people and unfortunately, this leads to a lot of disaster. Finally, if you could also use your good office in the quest of people going for Umrah to ask the Bank of Mauritius to make sufficient availability of Saudi Riyals so that backyard dealings are no longer the norm. Thank you.

**Mr Teeluck:** Well noted, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in his reply, gave the figure of 300 riyals and to add up to a total of 875 riyals for the cost of the visa. You will concur with me that

there is a big difference between 300 and 875; if he can give the details of this difference and even if he does not have it now, he can circulate it now afterwards.

**Mr Teeluck:** Of course. I am not privy to the breakdown but information that has been received is that the Government charges for visa are 300 riyals but when you add associated costs for instance, medical insurance, online processing fees, this is when the charges inflate to approximately 875. So, of course, I will look for the breakdown to have more, *allons dire visibilité sur le montant total qui est proposé aujourd'hui* for visa applications and submit to the House. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

### **BASIC INVALIDITY PENSIONS – APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

**(No. B/132) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Basic Invalidity Pensions, she will state the number of applications received for the granting thereof since July 2021 to date, including the number thereof received from persons suffering from physical and/or mental disabilities, indicating the number thereof benefitting thereunder.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since the coming into Office of our Government, the Basic Invalidity Pension which was at Rs3,267 has continuously increased to reach Rs10,000. This represents an increase of more than 206.3%.

Moreover in the last budget, a new measure was announced to care and assist people, suffering from an incapacity of 40 to 59%. Those eligible benefit from a disability allowance of Rs2,500. Having said that, Mr Speaker, Sir, by virtue of Section 8 of the National Pension Act 1976, a person is entitled to the Invalid Basic Pension if he is below the age of 60 and is found by the Medical Board to be suffering from a physical and mental disability of at least 60% for a period of at least 12 months. All applications have to be assessed by Medical Board for determination of eligibility to the Invalid Basic Pension on the basis of the sixth schedule of the National Pensions Act and the Medical Guidelines. It is to be noted that claimants who are severely handicapped or bed-ridden do not have to attend the Medical Board. Assessment is conducted at their residence. In line with the National Pensions Act, the Invalid Basic Pension is awarded for a period of not less than one year, after which the person is reassessed by the

Medical Board if need be to determine whether the said pension should be continued or discontinued. It is of utmost importance to understand that at the time of awarding the pension, the duration for which the person will receive the said pension, is clearly specified.

At the expiry of the duration, the pension is stopped. However, there are cases where the Medical Board informs the Ministry to call the persons two months prior to the pension being stopped for reassessment. As such, some two months preceding the date on which the pension is due to stop, a letter is sent to the beneficiary to notify him that a medical re-boarding will be carried out for a fresh assessment with a view to determining whether he is still eligible for the pension or not. Persons with disabilities are therefore duly notified before their pensions are discontinued. The applicant has the right to appeal to the Medical Tribunal in case his application is turned down by the Medical Board.

I am informed that since July 2022 to date, the Ministry has received 17,561 applications for the Invalid Basic Pension which were referred to the Medical Board. Out of the 17,561 applications, 14,712 cases have been processed and 6,992 have been found to be eligible for the said pension by the Medical Board and 6,864 cases have been disallowed. Out of the 6,864 cases, 2,406 cases have appealed to the Medical Board, 437 appeals have been allowed and 1,969 cases have been disallowed.

**Mrs Mayotte:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member mentioned the Medical Tribunal. Can you please tell us more about the composition of this Tribunal?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** The Medical Tribunal comprises two Specialist Medical Practitioners in the field of the relevant illness and a Law Practitioner from the State Law Office as Chairperson.

**Mrs Mayotte:** Can the hon. Minister state whether it is possible that someone who is granted Permanent Invalidity Pension, has his pension interrupted?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** I don't think so because where the applicants suffer from incapacity of more than 60% up to 100%, the person will be granted the Basic Invalidity Pension on a permanent basis. Well, the only reason, I can find is if the person has passed away, otherwise, if the Basic Invalidity Pension has been awarded on a permanent basis, I do not think there will be an interruption.

**Ms Tour:** Already canvassed. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**MUSLIM MARRIAGES – TARDY REGISTRATION – SURVIVING SPOUSE  
ALLOWANCE**

**(No. B/133) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to Muslim marriages effected since July 2022 to date, he will state the number of –

- (a) tardy registration thereof, and
- (b) applications received for the grant of the Surviving Spouse Allowance, indicating the number thereof having been
  - (i) allowed, and
  - (ii) disallowed, indicating the reasons therefor.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, for years, Muslim widows whose religious marriages, *nikah* were not registered with the Muslim Family Council, were not eligible for the Basic Widows Pension. This issue has been left unaddressed for more than 40 years. Since I assumed Office at the Ministry, addressing this issue has been one of our priorities. I could not have left this issue unattended when many widows were suffering and struggling to make ends meet especially where they have children. Life wasn't easy for them. I have had a word with the Prime Minister who, I must say, was very supportive just like when I approached him concerning children less than 15 years with disabilities who were not eligible to the Basic Invalidity Pension merely because of an age criteria. Our Government has addressed both issues bringing relief to so many families.

Therefore in the last Budget 2022-2023, it was announced that the Basic Widows Pension will be extended to Muslim widows through tardy registration of religious marriage before the Muslim Family Council. Amendments were consequently brought through the Finance Act to the National Pensions Act, the Social Aid Regulations, the Civil Status Act and the Civil Status Muslim Family Council Regulation 2005.

Regulations 4(a) was introduced in the Civil Status Muslim Family Council Regulations 2005 to allow the surviving female spouse of the Muslim religious marriage celebrated between 01 January 1982 and 30 November 1987 and between 01 December 1992 and 31 August 2022 to make an application to the Muslim Family Council for the tardy registration of a religious marriage. All applications for tardy registration had to be made in a prescribed form not later than 31 December 2022. I can also add that a reasonable delay of four months was given to the ladies to apply for the registration of the tardy marriage.

So, once the Muslim religious marriage is celebrated during the abovementioned periods are registered with the Muslim Family Council, applications are made to my Ministry for either a Surviving Spouse Allowance, where there are several spouses or for a Basic Widows Pension, where there is only one spouse.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Muslim Family Council that 140 applications have been received for tardy registration of Muslim religious marriage, out of which, 110 certificates of *nikkah* have already been issued by the Muslim Family Council.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that to date, my Ministry has received 100 applications for the Basic Widows Pension from applicants who have already been issued with the certificate of tardy registration by the Muslim Family Council. Out of the 100 applications, 95 have already been awarded and 5 have been disallowed. The reasons for disallowance are as follows –

- (a) Applicant's spouse had contracted a civil marriage with another person and therefore the applicant cannot benefit from the Surviving Spouse Allowance. Only the spouse who was civilly married was eligible to the Basic Widows Pension, and
- (b) Applicant is already drawing Basic Retirement Pension and a Carer's Allowance and is therefore not eligible for another basic pension.

Thank you.

**Mr Abbas Mamode:** Yes, can the hon. Minister specify specific period being covered by the provision of tardy registration of Muslim marriages?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Well, as I have already mentioned in my reply, it is the period between 01 January 1982 and 13 November 1987 and also the period between 01 December

1990 and 31 August 2022. You will realise that one period has not been covered, that is, 1987 to 1990. Why? Because those widows are benefitting from a Surviving Partner's Allowance under the Social Aid Regulations 1984, if my memory serves me right, in an amount equivalent to the Basic Retirement Pension, that is, Rs10,000.

**Mr Abbas Mamode:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the Minister inform the House within how many days should a Muslim religious marriage normally be registered with the Muslim Family Council?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Are you saying if someone gets married today?

**Mr Abbas Mamode:** Yes.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** So, 21 days from the date the marriage has been celebrated.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**MAURITIUS – AGEING POPULATION – ACTION PLAN –  
2022 TO 2026**

**(No. B/134) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the issue of ageing population in Mauritius, he will –

- (a) state the actions his Ministry proposes to take to address same, and
- (b) give details of the National Integrated Care for Older People Strategic and Action Plan 2022-2026.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past 30 years, Mauritius has been experiencing growth in the number and proportion of people aged 60 years and older in the population and this trend is expected to further increase in coming decades. It is worth highlighting that people aged 60 years and above as a percentage of total population was 9% in the year 2000, 19.4% in the year 2022, more than double in fact, and is projected to increase to 36.5% in the year 2061. So, the “oldest, old people,” that is, the population aged 80 years and above is projected to increase more than twofold from 26,432 in year 2021 to 65,461 in 2061.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is undertaking a series of activities to cater for the health and quality of life of the

elderly. One such activity is the fast track system which has been set up for the elderly at all levels of health care delivery system. There are separate queues for elderly people at the Casualty and Pharmacy Departments. Elderly people are also provided with free spectacles and hearing aids.

Other initiatives include, amongst others, the yearly immunisation campaign targeting the elderly which is on-going to protect them against seasonal flu and domiciliary visits by Medical Health Officers of the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. Recently, elderly people have also been encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 to better protect them.

Additionally, regular health education programmes, including screening are organised to prevent complications among chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiac problems and so on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since there are a greater number of elderly women at higher age brackets, a more focus and targeted approach is operational for health problems of elderly women in relation to menopause, reproductive health cancers, nutrition and mental problems. In this respect, national programmes are being implemented on maternal and child health, cancer prevention control, prevention of malnutrition and decentralised mental health services, respectively.

Moreover, in line with the, as earlier stated, National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy 2022 and the Implementation Plan 2022-2027, measures are being undertaken to ensure that the Sexual and Reproductive Health of the elderly is given due consideration.

Accordingly, required support is being given to any elderly patients concerned, in a manner ensuring privacy and dignity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question which concerns the National Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Strategic Plan elaborated by my Ministry, same is in line with the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) 2020-2024) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has been developed through the support of the World Health Organisation (WHO).



The National ICOPE Strategic and Action Plan, which has been launched by the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, is a landmark step for our country. Mauritius is the first country in Africa to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan on addressing the healthcare challenges of an ageing population. It will ensure that our country provides healthcare adapted to the needs of an ageing population, with a user-friendly and holistic approach, at all stages of the ageing process.

One of the 55 activities planned under the National Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Strategic and Action Plan 2022-2026 is the development and implementation of a *Carnet de Santé*, which is a free booklet that every senior citizen will be able to use so that patients, family members and carers gain better understanding and control over their healthcare issues.

The *Carnet de Santé* will also help improve coordination of care among all healthcare providers for every elderly person across the Republic of Mauritius, ensuring that care provided is tailor-made to the individual patient, and that a holistic and pro-active approach is used to address diseases associated with ageing.

Another activity under the National ICOPE Strategic and Action Plan will be the Yearly Age-Well Screening programme for a wide range of diseases that affect the elderly, such as dementia, nutritional issues, mobility impairment, and vision and hearing loss.

In addition, Early Dementia Diagnosis Clinics, which have been setup in recent years at Victoria Hospital and SSRN Hospital, will be extended to each of the five regional hospitals, to ensure that Mauritians all across the island, benefit from multi-disciplinary care and counselling from a range of specialised healthcare professionals if they suffer from dementia.

Several activities under the Plan will focus on extending and improving education and training provided to up-skill healthcare staff, family members and carers in how to care for our elderly, with the goal of empowering each and every one with the knowledge and skills to better look after our elders.

Moreover, the use of clinical care protocols in geriatric care across healthcare settings will ensure that benchmarks for a high standard of care are well defined, and put to application in looking after elderly patients.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry looks forward to fulfilling the objectives of the National Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Strategic and Action Plan over the next four years, as we move towards this Government's vision for our elders –

“All older people age healthily, with respect and dignity, and enjoy their human rights.”

Thank you.

**Ms Tour:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister give us further details on the yearly screening programme and explain how this will help our elderly achieve a longer and a happier lifestyle?

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on the Yearly Age-Well Screening Programme, for the guidelines, there are six objectives. Ageing is a process, so, there are different faculties in fact that get slow down with age. There are six key health care domains that are central to the health and independence of elderly –

- (i) cognition is very important, in fact, cognition is memory;
- (ii) mobility;
- (iii) vision;
- (iv) hearing;
- (v) nutrition, and
- (vi) mental health issues.

So, this is how this *Carnet de Santé* will provide yearly assessment of the elderly as per the ICOPE Strategic Plan and this assessment will determine how these ageing process; loss of faculties are being carried with time and while doing so, proper monitoring and appropriate treatment will not only result in longer life but also greater autonomy. It is very important to have greater autonomy throughout the ageing process.

So, under this Action Plan, each and every Mauritian aged above 60 years will be able to have access to this yearly screening package free of charge and this holistic approach towards ageing will help ensure that we offer the best model of healthcare possible to our elder population.

**Mrs Mayotte:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister provide the House with information relating to the setting up of a Geriatric Healthcare Unit? Thank you.

**Dr. Jagutpal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very important to have the Geriatric Healthcare Unit because this is how we are going to monitor the ageing process. So, this will comprise of Specialists in Geriatrics, Medical Health Officers, Nursing Officers and Supporting Staff. They will operate under the guidance and close monitoring of the Consultant-in-Charge who will be part of and report to the National Steering Committee and the National Technical Committee being set up to oversee and support the implementation of the ICOPE.

In addition, the Geriatric Healthcare Unit will ensure that early dementia diagnosis clinics which have already been set up in some hospitals and that will be extended to other hospitals will ensure that Mauritians all across the island benefit from this scheme. So, this Geriatric Healthcare Unit will be when the screening has been done with the *Carnet de Santé* and been referred whenever it is important for them to have the cognitive assessment.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/142, B/143, B/155, B/160, B/166, B/169, B/178, B/180, B/181, B/199, B/205, and B/209 have been withdrawn. Next question!

### STRAY DOGS – MEASURES

**(No. B/135) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to issue of stray dogs, he will state the measures his Ministry proposes to address same.

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose to reply to PQ B/135 and PQ B/168 together as they both relate to same subject matter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) as follows –

- Over the years the present system's approach to control the canine over population did not have a long-lasting effect on curbing the stray population in Mauritius and this is because it addresses the end result of the problem instead of tackling the problem at its source.

- The population of free roaming dogs both owned and unowned in Mauritius is still a cause for concern despite the culling method which was in place for a number of years.
- Besides, the modern and more sensitised public along with several international organisations have condemned the culling practice. The source of the dog population problem is the ever increasing breeding population, that is, the population of unsterilised dogs.
- Numerous pet owners do not sterilise their pets and allow them to roam freely in the localities, thus, puppies born from their pets are simply left on their own in the open or abandoned in the wild and along with the illegal breeding activities in some areas, the increasing population has become indeed a cause for concern.

To tackle the free roaming dog population, the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) has implemented the “Sustainable Project for the Dog Population Control in Mauritius”. The “Sustainable Project for Dog Population Control in Mauritius” consists of 4 pillars, namely –

- (i) The mass sterilisation of dogs;
- (ii) The registration of dogs;
- (iii) Survey of the Dog Population, and
- (iv) The Catch, Neuter and Release program.

To tackle the free roaming dog population, a mass sterilisation project for owned dogs has already been launched since June 2022 wherein owned dogs are being registered and microchipped. Moreover, communication and education campaigns are ongoing on the importance of responsible pet ownership and on the importance of sterilisation.

A digital platform has been introduced to provide information on the project and to allow online bookings for sterilisation. Once a pet owner applies for a voucher, it is issued within 48 hours. Pet owners are offered the choice to bring in their pets to the three MSAW stations across the island or take them to private vet clinics duly registered under the mass sterilisation program to get their pets neutered at their convenience. The three MSAW stations are located at Rose

Hill, Rose Belle and Plaine Magnien. There is a fourth MSAW Station being set up in Flacq and will be operational in the coming weeks.

A total number of 8 private vets and private veterinary clinics are offering their services for the sterilisation of dogs.

Regarding vouchers, a total number 5,942 sterilisation vouchers have been issued since June last year.

Regarding the free sterilisation campaign, these are being conducted around the island. So far, free sterilisation and registration campaigns have been held at Rose Hill, Plaine Magnien and Union Park. Sterilisation and registration campaigns have also been held at different community centres in towns and villages to reach out to a maximum number of persons. Outdoor campaigns have also been held in areas including Dubreuil, Malherbes, Montagne Longue, Cite La Cure, Bramsthan, Britania, Mangalkan, Albion, Sebastopol, Ecroignard , Pointe aux Sables and last week, Plaine des Papayes.

The upcoming places where the campaigns will be held are as follows: St Julien d'Hotman, La Brasserie, Cottage, Roches Noires, Pointe aux Piments, Riviere du Rempart, Grand Gaube and Terre Rouge amongst others.

To provide an extra help to those who do not have a means of transport, the MSAW has also been providing free transportation facilities during each of these sterilisation campaigns.

Furthermore, regarding sterilisation campaigns, MSAW officers also have been doing door to door sensitisation campaigns before the campaigns were being held at the community centres around the island.

Adoption campaign forms part of the programme of MSAW. The Catch-Neuter-Release programme, Mr Speaker, Sir, consists, as the name suggests, of catching, sterilisation and returning the dogs in the community. For this to happen, a close collaboration is required with NGOs and other stakeholders. The Catch-Neuter-Release (CNR) method has been considered because of its success and popularity in several countries such as India, Italy, Brazil, Bangladesh and Thailand just to name a few.

The CNR programme is being done by the MSAW and in order to have a significant figure and achieve a target, an Expression of Interest to have the services of vets was launched.

The first bidding for a service provider for the CNR project has been completed in December last year. The second stage of the bidding has been prepared and will be published in the local press in the coming weeks.

Finally, I also wish to highlight the collaboration that we are having with the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning. I am informed by the Ministry of Housing that it is presently compiling a list of all requests received from NGOs and concerned individuals relating to projects, for the accommodation of shelters for stray dogs. This project is ongoing at this stage and I may provide further information at a later stage.

Regarding PQ B/168, Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of strays specifically at Flic en Flac public beach, this matter does not fall under the responsibility of the MSAW but of the Livestock and Veterinary Division of my Ministry. I am informed by the Livestock and Veterinary Division of my Ministry that 3 dog carcasses were brought to the Livestock and Veterinary Division by the Flic en Flac Police relating to a case under inquiry OB Number 417/2023 on 07 and 08 February of this year.

On 07 February 2023, one dog was brought in by the Police. Post-mortem was conducted by 2 vets of the Ministry and the post-mortem revealed a suspicion of poisoning.

On 08 February 2023, two further carcasses were brought by the Police and post-mortem examination, once again conducted by 2 vets of the Livestock and Veterinary Division, led to a suspicion of poisoning.

These carcasses were in a state of advanced decomposition. Since poisoning was suspected in the three dogs, samples were collected and sent to the Forensic Science Lab for confirmation of suspicion of poisoning. I am informed that the Police enquiry is ongoing.

**Mr R. Duval:** Les secouristes qui font un travail extraordinaire ont fait la demande pour l'institution d'une Police des animaux. Peut-on savoir que compte faire le ministre dans ce sens et quand ?

**Mr Gobin:** First of all, I wish to seize this opportunity to thank a number of NGOs which are collaborating with the MSAW on a number of issues. With regard to the suggestion of the creation of *Police des animaux*, I have heard of this proposal but it is still at an early stage for me to say what is going to happen. I can have consultations with the Commissioner of Police

depending on availability of manpower, but consultations can be held with the Commissioner of Police. It is still at an early stage, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Nuckcheddy:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House if MSAW has any legal rights to serve notice to irresponsible dog owners?

**Mr Gobin:** The issue concerns, if I understand correctly, a section in the law concerning compulsory registration. That section, Mr Speaker, Sir, has not yet been proclaimed, that is, Section 31, if my memory serves me right. The MSAW has submitted a proposal for the proclamation of that section and the proposal is being studied at the Ministry in consultation with other stakeholders because there are certain consequences when this section will be proclaimed. I can assure the House that the matter is being looked into and a decision will be taken soon.

**Mr Dhunoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In his answer, the Minister mentioned about private veterinary services that are being offered for sterilisation. Can he table the list of veterinaries that are registered with the Ministry?

**Mr Gobin:** As I stated, there is a total number of 8 private vets offering their services. I do not have the list right now. I can provide it at a later stage, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/137, B/138, B/190, and B/200 have been withdrawn. Next question!

### **PHOENIX CEMETERY – LARCENY CASES – REMEDIAL MEASURES**

(No. B/136) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the Phoenix Cemetery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas and Phoenix, information as to the measures taken and/or that will be taken to avert risks of thefts at the various burial grounds and graves thereat.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix that the following cases of theft at the Phoenix Cemetery have been reported at its level and also to the Vacoas Police Station –

- (i) On 22 December 2022, loss of copper pipes at the Phoenix Crematorium evaluated at Rs78,999.

- (ii) On 23 January 2023, 4 aluminium frames enclosing private graves which were fixed by the respective owners were stolen.

I am informed that the necessary repairs have already been effected to the incinerator equipment and same is operational. Beside the fact that watch keeping services were already provided on a daily basis from 18.00 hours to 09.00 hours the next morning, the Council has taken the following additional measures as a result of these cases of larceny –

- (i) Due to this situation, only one gate near the office instead of four gates remains open to the public in order to exercise a better control access to and from the cemetery.
- (ii) On 07 March 2023, a request has been made to the Commissioner of Police to consider the possibility of fixing CCTV cameras in the vicinity of the Phoenix Cemetery in the context of the implementation of the Safe City Project.

**Mr Lobine:** Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform this House if he has received complaints about drug peddlers and drug addicts using the Phoenix Cemetery to operate in the recent days? This has been the case for the past few days.

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, we are aware of the problem, Mr Speaker, Sir. Unfortunately, Phoenix Cemeteries is about 16 acres of land. We do not have enough staffs to control that, but the Public Health Department of the Council has made a request for the provision of additional fund following the next financial Budget Estimates to increase the number of security guards posted at the Phoenix Cemetery.

**Mr Lobine:** May I press upon the Vice-Prime Minister, especially for those proceeding for late burials to have police assistance there, because there have been recent complaints of attacks from drug addicts on people attending and leaving late burials. If police assistance could be envisaged, pending implementation of CCTV camera?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, but I do not know whether the Municipality can ask for police assistance there or it is the family that should. I do not really know, but I can look into it. I do understand the problem, not just in Phoenix, but in many cemeteries across the island.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!



**GRAND BAIE - SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT -  
IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/137) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the implementation of the sewerage infrastructure project in Grand Baie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CUREPIPE – FORUM - RENOVATION**

**(No. B/138) Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the Forum, in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if the renovation of the temporary structure thereof is being envisaged and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MALAKOFF ROAD, LA MARIE - DRAIN NETWORK PROJECT**

**(No. B/139) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the drain network project at Malakoff Road, in La Marie, he will state the expected –

- (a) completion date of Phase 1, and
- (b) starting date of Phase 2 from La Marie Crematory.

*(Withdrawn)*

**RIVIÈRE DU REMPART – CEB'S CASH OFFICE**

**(No. B/140) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the premises housing the Cash Office of the Central Electricity Board located at Temple Road, in Rivière du Rempart, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if same is being vacated and, if so, indicate where same is being transferred, indicating the name/s of owner of the new premises wherein same will be housed and the terms and conditions of the contract therefor.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that it is currently renting office space of an extent of 124 m<sup>2</sup> at the ground floor of a building located at Temple Road, Rivière du Rempart as well as three parking slots to accommodate its Cash and Customer Service Office. The office comprises only one cash counter and only one customer service counter.

However, in recent years, in view of developments in the area and increase in volume of activities, the Central Electricity Board has found that the current Cash and Customer Service Office no longer meets the requirements of its customers. The parking space was also found to be inadequate.

Moreover, during heavy rains, the Central Electricity Board Cash and Customer Service Office is flooded as the floor level of the building is lower than the access road, thus causing serious inconvenience to customers and staff, as well as damage to furniture and fittings.

The lessor was requested to effect the necessary repairs and upgrading works to the building in order to attend to the above problems and to meet statutory norms and standards. However, the requests had remained unattended.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to providing a better service to its customers and staff, I am informed that, in line with prevailing procurement procedures, CEB launched an Expression of Interest through a press advert in March 2021 for the rental of office space in the vicinity of the existing Cash and Customer Service Office at Rivière du Rempart. Following the Expression of Interest exercise, a Request for Proposal was issued by the Central Electricity Board in September 2021.

Subsequently, after an assessment by the Valuation Office of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning to the effect that the proposed rental rate was fair and reasonable, a letter of acceptance was issued to one Mrs Sushila Devi Ramnarain, on 11 May 2022, for the lease of office space of an extent of 240 m<sup>2</sup> situated along Temple Road, Rivière du Rempart, near to the existing CEB office. The contract is for a duration of two years with the rental is Rs48,500 per month. The Lease Agreement also includes rental of a minimum of five parking slots.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Central Electricity Board is currently undertaking the works to customise the office space to meet the needs of its staff and customers including –

- fixing of custom furniture for setting up of two cash counters and two customer service counters;
- electrical installations;
- acquisition of telecommunication equipment, and
- supply and fixing of two water tanks and associated plumbing works.

The works are expected to be completed by the end of April 2023 and thereafter, the new Central Electricity Board Cash and Customer Service Office of Rivière du Rempart will be transferred thereto.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le ministre, le *owner*, comme vous avez dit de ce bâtiment, si j'ai bien compris, est Madame Sushila Devi Ramnarain. Ce bâtiment est connu à Rivière du Rempart pour le Ramnarain Building, vous êtes sûrement au courant, M. le ministre. Ce bâtiment appartient au Chairman de la SIT, l'époux de Madame Ramnarain, M. R. R. Est-ce que M. le ministre, vous étiez au courant au moment de l'allocation de ce contrat pour ce bâtiment que M. Ramnarain, le Chairman de la SIT, qui est un homme public et qui est cité depuis quelques jours dans beaucoup d'allégations, est un agent du MSM au numéro sept et a eu ce contrat du CEB ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Non, M. le président, je n'étais pas au courant. Mais est-ce qu'un président, conseil d'administration, d'une entité comme le CEB informe son ministre quand il y a des contrats pareils qui sont alloués? Non, M. le président, parce que le contrat a été alloué suivant les procédures d'appel d'offres et en toute transparence. Qu'est-ce que l'honorable membre veut insinuer en posant cette question, qu'il nous dise qu'est-ce qu'il veut insinuer? C'est quoi? ? C'est quoi?

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, on a posé des questions et je suis en train de répondre en toute transparence. Les procédures ont été suivies à la lettre et je donne les détails. Il y a eu un appel à intérêt lancé le 20 mars 2021. Il y a eu cinq soumissionnaires. Parmi ces cinq soumissionnaires, deux ont été retenus. Par la suite, le 29 septembre, il y a eu une demande de propositions de ces

deux soumissionnaires. Par la suite, c'est l'offre de Madame Sushila Devi Ramnarain qui a été retenue parce que l'autre soumissionnaire n'a pas voulu étendre la validité de son offre. Voilà !

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le président, j'ai une question supplémentaire. Maintenant que vous êtes au courant, M. le ministre,...

**Mr Lesjongard:** Au courant de quoi?

**Mr Assirvaden:** Laissez-moi terminer ! Laissez-moi terminer !

**Mr Lesjongard:** Au courant de quoi ?

**Mr Assirvaden:** Laissez-moi terminer ! Pourquoi vous êtes irrités ?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Parce que je suis au courant que je suis responsable de l'énergie.

**Mr Assirvaden:** Laissez-moi terminer. Le président m'a donné une question.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Vous êtes au courant de tout.

**Mr Assirvaden:** Pourquoi vous êtes irrités?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Je ne suis pas irrité, loin de là.

**Mr Assirvaden:** Mais laissez-moi poser ma question !

**Mr Lesjongard:** C'est vous qui êtes tout le temps irrités. Allez, poser votre question !

**Mr Assirvaden:** Puis-je ?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order !

**Mr Lesjongard:** Posez votre question !

**Mr Assirvaden:** Maintenant que vous êtes au courant, M. le ministre, que le bâtiment Ramnarain appartient à ce monsieur...

**Mr Lesjongard:** Non, j'ai dit le nom de madame ; pas monsieur.

**Mr Assirvaden:** Laissez-moi terminer !

**Mr Speaker:** No, but ...

**Mr Assirvaden:** Laissez-moi terminer!

**Mr Speaker:** I am the Speaker, you can't fight...

**Mr Assirvaden:** Mais, il refuse...

**Mr Speaker:** I am regulating order in the House.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Non, je ne refuse pas.

**Mr Speaker:** Cool down, cool down. You can't insinuate something. The Minister has just said the name of a lady and now you are saying the name of a man.

**Mr Assirvaden:** M. le ministre, maintenant que vous êtes au courant que le monsieur R. R., le fameux, R. R...

*(Interruptions)*

Ne t'en fait pas !

*(Interruptions)*

... est l'époux de celui qui a eu ce contrat pour ce bâtiment, et ce monsieur R. R., M. le président, a eu des allégations de *bribe money* contre lui !

**Mr Speaker:** I disallow this question!

**Mr Assirvaden:** Il était ...

**Mr Speaker:** I disallow this question!

**Mr Assirvaden:** C'est la ...

**Mr Speaker:** Next question! I disallow this question!

Next question! Next question! Whose turn is it?

**Mr Lesjongard:** *Zet laboue lor dimoun sa ki zot fort.*

**Mr Speaker:** The next question would be? Nobody's turn?

*(Interruptions)*

That is a good one. So, no further questions! Madam Clerk, move on. Next question is for whom? Please, go ahead!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** We still have some minutes!

**Mr Mohamed:** *Pa bizin per, koze.*

**Mr Léopold:** I have a question.

**Mr Speaker:** You put your question?

**Mr Léopold:** Yes.

### **CWA - OLD WATER PIPES – REPLACEMENT**

**(No. B/141) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the replacement of old water pipes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MR J. H. C - INTEGRITY REPORTING SERVICES AGENCY - ENQUIRY**

**(No. B/142) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to Mr J. H. C., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Integrity Reporting Services Agency, information as to if an enquiry has been initiated under the Unexplained Wealth Order in relation thereto and the persons arrested by the Independent Commission against Corruption for allegedly acting as “*prête-noms*” thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **OLD LA TOUR KOENIG GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - REPRESENTATIONS**

**(No. B/143) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Old La Tour Koenig Government School, she will state if she has received representations from parents of students thereof in relation to the –

(a) state of the infrastructure thereof, and

(b)shortage of the teaching staff thereat.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MALAKOFF – DRAIN PROJECT**

**(No. B/145) Mr A. Ittoo (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the implementation of the drain project at Malakoff, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **STREET CHILDREN - MEASURES**

**(No. B/147) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to street children, she will state the –

(a)current estimated number thereof, indicating the number –

(i) of boys and girls;

(ii) out of school, and

(iii) using drugs;

(b)number of staff members of her Ministry attending thereto, and

(c)measures envisaged to address this situation.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **INTERNATIONAL WOMAN DAY - VISIT TO RODRIGUES - OUTCOME**

**(No. B/148) Mr J. B. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to her recent visit in Rodrigues in the context of the International Woman Day, she will state the outcome thereof.

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Commission for Women’s Affair, Child Development and Family Welfare and Others extended an invitation to me as chief guest to the official ceremony of International Woman Day 2023 in Rodrigues on 08 March this year. I had the opportunity during my half day visit to reiterate the Central

Government's commitment towards an inclusive society and to highlight on the cordial relations that exist between Governments.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister ... Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Continue hon. Minister!

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Okay, thank you. I further emphasise on Rodrigues being part of the Republic of Mauritius has been included in the measures and policies intended for the development of the country and the welfare of the people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the margin of the visit, I had a fruitful work session with the said Commissioner and the representatives of the Commission whereby we identified areas for common ground of collaboration, namely of fights against domestic violence including the extension of the Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS) to Rodrigues, the revamping of the National Women Entrepreneur Council and the conceptualisation of a National Policy Paper on the family.

Subsequently, Mr Speaker, Sir, a team from my Ministry proceeded to Rodrigues for a consultative workshop on the formulation of the National Policy Paper on the family. The officers of the Commission and the Mauritius Police Force based in Rodrigues working for the *Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* were trained on the use of the information system.

**Mr Léopold:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House when the report on the National Policy Paper will be ready?

**Mrs Koonjoo-Shah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the consultation is ongoing and they have already kick-started. I don't have a definite time frame on when the paper will be ready, but I can reassure the hon. Member and the House that my Ministry in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders is working *d'arrache-pied sur ce papier. Merci.*

**Mr Speaker:** You missed your turn. Please go ahead!

## 11<sup>TH</sup> INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES - ORGANISATION

(No. B/144) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the 11<sup>th</sup> Indian



Ocean Island Games to be held in 2023 in Madagascar, he will state if the *Conseil International des Jeux* has officially confirmed the organization thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the scheduled dates;
- (b) the list of scheduled sports disciplines, indicating the list thereof and of events in which Mauritian athletes will be participating, and
- (c) a breakdown of the budget allocated to each participating sport federation

**Mr Toussaint:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Olympic Committee (MOC) that in a letter dated 17 March 2023, the ‘*Comité d’Organisation des Jeux des Iles 2023*’ (COJI) has officially informed the ‘*Conseil International des Jeux des Iles*’ (CIJ) that the 11<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Islands Games would be held in Madagascar from 25 August to 03 September 2023.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the following 23 disciplines have been retained for the Games, namely –

- (1) Athletics including Para Athletics;
- (2) Badminton;
- (3) Basketball [(3x3) and (5x5)];
- (4) Boxing;
- (5) Cycling;
- (6) Equestrian;
- (7) Football including Beach Soccer;
- (8) Weightlifting;
- (9) Handball;
- (10) Judo;
- (11) Karate;
- (12) Kickboxing;
- (13) Wrestling;
- (14) Swimming including Para Swimming;
- (15) *Pétanque*;
- (16) Rugby (7 and 15);

- (17) Surfing;
- (18) Tae Kwon Do;
- (19) Tennis;
- (20) Table Tennis;
- (21) Archery;
- (22) Yachting, and
- (23) Volleyball including Beach Volley.

The Republic of Mauritius intends to participate in all the above mentioned sports disciplines as well as youth activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a dedicated budget of Rs25 m. has been earmarked in financial year 2022-2023 for the preparation of our athletes for the Indian Ocean Islands Games 2023. This budget is being used on the basis of the Preparation Plans submitted by National Sports Federations concerned. The budget is mainly used to cover expenses for the following activities –

1. organisation of competitions locally;
2. participation in competitions abroad;
3. organisation of training camps locally;
4. participation in training camps abroad;
5. provision of transport facilities during training, and
6. purchase of sports equipment for training.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQs B/143, B/147, B/161, B/163, B/171, B/189, B/191, B/192, B/195, B/203, B/204, B/208, and have been withdrawn.

Time is over! Thank you very much!

## MOTION

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

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr 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.

**Mr Seeruttun seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

(4.26 p.m.)

### **8,000 SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION**

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, following a statement made in the House at the Sitting of Tuesday of 04 April 2023 having regard to the proposed construction of the first phase of 8,000 social housing units and to the effect that no provision has been made for a specific constituency, I wish to set the record straight.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when, after the 2020-2021 budget announcement of the 12,000 Housing Units Project, the NSLD got down to the task of implementation, it was estimated that some 55 sites corresponding to approximately 478 arpents of land across the island of Mauritius would be required to construct 600 units for inhabitants of each of the 20 electoral constituencies. It then became immediately obvious that the first major constraint faced would be scarcity of land, more specifically in the smaller and more densely populated constituencies. Nonetheless, no effort was spared to identify appropriate building sites in each of these constituencies.

As time passed, and despite Government using its very best endeavours to find appropriate land, whether private or public, it was recognised that not in all constituencies would it be possible to secure the extent of land required for construction of 600 housing units. Public Expressions of Interest for sale of private land to the NSLD, extensive research by the survey department of my Ministry and thorough enquiries at the level of parastatal organisations and publicly owned enterprises were to no avail.

Moreover, as the project proceeded, it was found that a number of sites initially identified with a view to ensuring provision of social housing physically located in each and every constituency could not be considered. The reasons for various sites in different constituencies not being recommended in the event, were many –

- (i) sites having a high-water table or being flood prone;
- (ii) unfavourable geotechnical investigations including for instance, lava tunnel, large cavities and caves;
- (iii) exceedingly high cost of on-site soil rehabilitation and retaining structures as prerequisites;
- (iv) high cost associated with imperative off-site infrastructural works.

Unfortunately, it was often late in the day that sites initially found to be conveniently located, having regard to demand for social housing and proximity to social amenities and public utilities were often unexpectedly found not to be buildable for technical or financial reasons. For instance, and these are just a few examples, previously identified sites at Vallée Pitot, Raoul Rivet Street in Port Louis, Cité la Cure, Le Hochet, Camp Levieux Rose Hill, La Chaumière Branch Road Rose Hill, although very desirable sites, had to be abandoned. Such occurrences contributed to the significant delay in implementation of the project as the whole process of identification and vetting of sites had to be started anew.

Faced with such a situation, Government decided that whenever and wherever the targeted number of social housing units could not, in whole or in part, be physically located in any given constituency, the corresponding number of social housing units would be reserved for inhabitants of that constituency on the nearest appropriate NSLD new housing complex.

Having regard to the first phase of the project consisting of construction of 8,000 social housing units, that is 400 per constituency, the situation is as follows –

1. Constituency No. 1, Grand River North West and Port Louis West, where land is available for 300 housing units at Pointe aux Sables, the remaining, the balance of 100 units will be built at Coromandel but reserved exclusively for inhabitants of Constituency No. 1.
2. As regards Constituency No. 2, Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, where no appropriate building site is available, 350 units will be constructed at Arsenal and 50 units at Coromandel to be attributed to inhabitants of Constituency No. 2 only.

3. Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, where given that no appropriate building sites are available, 200 units will be constructed at Arsenal, 200 units at Riche Terre to be exclusively allocated to inhabitants of Constituency No. 3.
4. Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, 120 units will be constructed in the region of Avenue Pusspass which is in the constituency. A balance of 280 units will be constructed at La Source which is found in the neighbouring Constituency No. 14 but will be reserved for residents of Constituency No. 18.
5. And finally, Constituency No. 19, Stanley and Rose Hill, where there is one site that is identified and buildable at Camp Levieux for 200 housing units. The balance of 200 will be constructed at Coromandel but earmarked exclusively for inhabitants of Constituency No. 19.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure this House that Government is not only committed but determined to do its utmost in order to alleviate the significant hardship pertaining to housing experienced by the poorest and most vulnerable sections of our population whoever they may be and wherever they may reside in our country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

(4.33 p.m.)

### **ISRAEL AND PALESTINE – HEIGHTENED TENSION – ACTS OF VIOLENCE**

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr A. Ganoo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two statements to make. I wish to inform the House that on 07 April 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade issued a communiqué wherein the Government of Mauritius strongly condemns the acts of violence in the Al-Aqsa Mosque at such a sacred time for Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Mauritius also called upon all parties concerned to exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that escalate tensions. The latest occurrences are indicative of the heightening of

tensions between Israel and Palestine since the beginning of 2023. Indeed, the violence had since the early days of January fuelled speculations that another *intifada* as in 1978 and 2000 could be imminent.

On 13 February 2023, the Israeli Government announced that it had authorised nine settlements in the occupied West Bank. This led to a statement by the UN Security Council highlighting that the expansion of settlement activity and continued Israeli settlement activity are impeding the viability of the Two-State solution. The Israeli Government rejected the UN Security Council Statement as “one sided”.

On 26 February 2023, following talks in Jordan, Israeli and Palestinian delegates made a joint commitment to take immediate steps to end the recent surge in violence. The two sides affirmed their commitment to all previous agreements between them and to work towards just and lasting peace. Both sides also committed to immediately working to end unilateral measures for a period of 3 to 6 months.

Despite this statement, violence continued in the occupied territories causing more than 25 deaths in February 2023 while the Israeli Government declared its intent to deploy forces and introduce additional security measures to act against terrorism. In response, the Palestinians condemned the dangerous escalation of the conflict.

Those talks also included a commitment by Israel to stop discussion of any new settlement units for four months and to stop authorisation of any outposts for 6 months. The parties agreed to reconvene in Egypt in March 2023 to determine progress towards these goals. However, despite the commitments, the intensified violence took place in the West Bank while the talks in Jordan did cast further doubts over the commitments expressed by both sides.

In March 2023, Mr Speaker, Sir, the wave of violence continued with regular exchange of fire between the Israeli and Palestinian forces. It is also to be recalled that on 30 December 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted resolutions 77/247 entitled ‘Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian territory including East Jerusalem’.

The UN General Assembly decided on 30 December 2022, to request the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to render an advisory opinion, *inter-alia*, on the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination,

from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The UN General Assembly resolution also asked the ICJ to render its opinion on the legality of the occupation and the legal consequences that arise for all states and for the UN from this status. The matter is ongoing at the ICJ.

We strongly condemn the excessive use of force that resulted in the death of civilians.

The cycle of violence of the first 3 months continued in April 2023. On 05 April 2023, clashes erupted after Israeli police entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque to eject Palestinians who had barricaded themselves inside overnight to pray. Some 400 Palestinians were arrested and the Palestinians retaliated and fired rockets at Israel from the Gaza Banks.

On 06 April 2023, a second expulsion raid was perpetrated by the Israeli forces on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and subsequently, the UN Security Council met in closed session to discuss the aggravating situation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as of yesterday the situation remained extremely tense as the Israeli forces killed a 15-year old Palestinian during a raid on a refugee camp. On the other hand, thousands of Israeli settlers marched to the illegal outpost of Evyatar, while being heavily protected by Israeli forces. Some leading members of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) including Ministers of the Israeli Cabinet join the march to legalise the outpost.

Mauritius has always voted for all resolutions at the United Nations condemning the Israeli illegal occupation and all blatant human rights violations against the Palestinian People.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is closely following the situation at the level of our Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION - TREATIES - MAURITIUS'  
ACCESSION**

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Industrial Property Act was proclaimed and came into force on 31 January last year. The new IP framework has broadened the scope of protection of IP rights to include the protection of utility models, layout-designs of integrated circuits, plant breeder's rights and geographical indications. Furthermore, the Act also provides for the international filing of applications for the protection of inventions, industrial designs and trademarks. In order to give effect to the provisions relating to the WIPO-administered Treaties referred to in the Industrial Property Act, steps have been taken by my Ministry to accede to the following three treaties –

(i) The Patent Cooperation Treaty

The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) is a treaty administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which makes it possible to seek patent protection for an invention simultaneously in each of a large number of countries by filing an "international" patent application.

In this regard, I wish to inform the House that Mauritius has already deposited its Instruments of Accession to the Patent Cooperation Treaty on 15 December 2022 and our accession has become effective on 15 March 2023.

The number of countries currently party to the PCT is 157. The PCT System, Mr Speaker, Sir, has many advantages for the applicant, for the Patent Office and for the general public. The PCT –

- streamlines the process of fulfilling diverse formality requirements;
- postpones the major costs associated with seeking multinational patent protection;
- provides a strong basis for patenting decisions, and
- is used by the world's major corporations, research institutions and universities when they seek multinational patent protection.

(ii) The Madrid Protocol

The Republic of Mauritius deposited its Instruments of Accession to the Madrid Protocol on 06 February this year and our membership will become effective on 06 May 2023.

The number of Contracting Parties to the Madrid system is 114 and it includes the EU and the *Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI)*.



The Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks is governed by the Madrid Agreement, concluded in 1891, and the Protocol relating to that Agreement, concluded in 1989. The system makes it possible to protect a mark in a large number of countries by obtaining an international registration that has effect in each of the designated Contracting Parties.

An application for international registration (international application) may be filed only by a natural person or legal entity having a connection – through establishment, domicile or nationality – with a Contracting Party to the Agreement or the Protocol.

The Madrid system offers several advantages for trademark owners. Instead of filing a separate national application in each separate country of interest, in several different languages, in accordance with different national or regional procedural rules and regulations and paying several different (and often higher) fees, an international registration may be obtained by simply filing one application with the International Bureau (through the office of the home country), in one language (English, French or Spanish) and paying only one set of fees.

### (iii) The Hague Agreement

The Republic of Mauritius deposited its Instruments of Accession to the Hague Agreement on 06 February of this year and our membership will become effective on 06 May 2023.

Currently, 79 Contracting Parties constitute the Hague Agreement, including the European Union and the *Organisation Africaine de la Propriété intellectuelle*.

The Hague Agreement is an international registration system which offers the possibility of obtaining protection for industrial designs in a number of States and/or intergovernmental organisations (both referred to as “Contracting Parties”) by means of a single international application filed with the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The Hague Agreement is constituted by two international treaties –

- The Geneva Act of July 02, 1999 (the “1999 Act”)
- The Hague Act of November 28, 1960 (the “1960 Act”)

The international registration of designs would result in simplified registration procedures and IP portfolio management. There will be a saving of costs: the applicant does not need to

provide translations of the documents nor to keep watch on the different deadlines for renewal of a great number of national applications, which differ from one State to another; he will thus avoid paying a series of national fees and fees to agents in different countries. Simplified procedures would facilitate access to new markets. All this, Mr Speaker, Sir, would have a positive impact on research, development and innovation activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of the accession of the Republic of Mauritius to the Patent Cooperation Treaty which became effective on 15 March of this, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) organised a seminar on the PCT System at the Westin Hotel Resort & Spa on Monday 03 April 2023.

The objective of the seminar was to create greater awareness among the users of the Patent System as well as to train the officers of the IP Office on the effective implementation of the PCT-related provisions in the domestic legislation.

This seminar was attended by many participants from academia, research and development institutions, legal practitioners and agents, inventors and the staff from the Industrial Property Office of Mauritius.

The one-day seminar was followed by two days' practical training for the staff of the IP Office, but was also attended by a number of stakeholders who had expressed interest in the subject.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, WIPO will continue to collaborate and provide assistance to the relevant stakeholders and users of the systems to ensure a better understanding and an effective implementation of the other treaties we have acceded to. Thank you.

## **PUBLIC BILLS**

### *Third Reading*

*On motion made and seconded, the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill (No. II of 2023) was read a third time and passed.*

### *Second Reading*

## **THE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE RECOVERY BILL (NO. I OF 2023)**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

(4.45 p.m.)

**The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano):** M. le président, depuis son entrée en service en 1997, plus de 10 millions de tonnes de déchets solides ont été éliminés à la décharge sanitaire de Mare Chicose d'une manière écologiquement sûre et saine.

La protection de la santé publique fut le principal moteur de l'intervention gouvernementale à travers la suppression progressive des décharges à ciel ouvert et la construction et l'exploitation de la décharge sanitaire a permis cela.

Nous avons noté une augmentation de déchets solides au site d'enfouissement de plus de 33 % au cours des 20 dernières années. La quantité moyenne de déchets solides par habitant mis en décharge quotidiennement a augmenté régulièrement, passant de 0,6 kg en 2000 à 1,18 kg en 2022.

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De plus, au cours des 10 dernières années, nous avons connu une augmentation annuelle de 2% des déchets mis en décharge, soit près de 500,000 tonnes en 2022. La raison principale pour expliquer cette situation est la croissance notable du niveau de vie qui a résulté invariablement en une sur consommation préjudiciable à l'environnement.

En 2020, mon ministère, avec l'aide de l'Université de Maurice, avait réalisé une étude de caractérisation des déchets. Cette étude a révélé que 50% des déchets mis en décharge sont de nature organique, à savoir des déchets alimentaires et des déchets verts. Les autres composants, appelés déchets secs, sont constitués de 17% de papier, 15% de plastiques de différents types, 4% de métaux, 5% de verre et 6% de matière textiles.

M. le président, dans un scénario de statu quo, on s'attend à ce que la quantité de déchets produits atteigne environ 650,000 tonnes d'ici 2030 si rien n'est fait.

M. le Président, cette situation est considérée comme non soutenable et nous devons impérativement découpler la production de déchets de la croissance économique. Nous devons

également prendre des mesures audacieuses pour détourner les déchets du site d'enfouissement qui a atteint un point de saturation.

Au fil des ans, nous observons également une augmentation constante dans les provisions du budget pour la gestion des déchets solides. Le gouvernement dépense environ 1,8 milliard de roupies par an pour la collecte, l'exploitation et l'entretien des stations de transfert et du site d'enfouissement, ainsi que pour le transport des déchets vers la décharge. Sur une base unitaire, le coût de la gestion des déchets solides est en moyenne de R 3,600 par tonne de déchets solides municipaux.

En tant que petit État insulaire en développement, nous sommes cependant confrontés aux défis des moyens financiers qui sont limités et, de la sécurité de l'approvisionnement en ressources.

Les pratiques actuelles qui comprennent l'importation de grandes quantités de matières premières et de biens; les fuites de déchets émanant de la production locale et la surconsommation, entraînent malheureusement le gaspillage de ressources rares et le remplissage du seul site d'élimination à un rythme alarmant. L'augmentation rapide des émissions de gaz à effet de serre telle que le méthane constitue également un problème non-négligeable.

Notre Consommation Intérieure de Matières (CIM), qui est un indicateur du niveau moyen de matières utilisées dans une économie, était de 9,42 tonnes par habitant en 2017. Ce chiffre est supérieur de 35% à la moyenne sub-saharienne.

Cette « culture du jetable » cependant, n'est pas économiquement et écologiquement viable. Les déchets sont l'affaire de tous - individus, ménages, quartiers, groupes communautaires, écoles, petites et grandes entreprises, autorités locales, gouvernement central et médias et ne doit pas être considérés comme relevant de la seule responsabilité du gouvernement.

Notre système de gestion des déchets ne peut plus être simplement composé de la collecte, du transport et de l'élimination par voie d'enfouissement des déchets que nous produisons.

Notre objectif doit être plus large en tenant en compte la façon que nous consommons les matériaux et les ressources et la façon que nous concevons les produits que les ménages et les entreprises utilisent.

M. le président, le modèle actuel d'économie linéaire « prendre, fabriquer et gaspiller » devra donc passer à un modèle d'économie circulaire.

Le modèle d'économie circulaire vise à donner la priorité à la consommation responsable des produits, à l'efficacité dans l'utilisation des ressources et à la réduction des déchets dans tous les secteurs économiques.

M. le président, selon les estimations du *Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI)*, sur une production alimentaire totale d'environ 2,4 millions de tonnes, importations comprises, 5,281 tonnes sont gaspillées chaque année, soit environ 1,73%.

Ces déchets alimentaires finissent généralement dans des décharges qui produisent des quantités sans précédent de méthane - un gaz à effet de serre plus puissant et plus nocif que le CO<sub>2</sub> - contribuant de manière significative au réchauffement climatique. Pour relever ces défis en vue d'assurer l'efficacité des ressources et d'atteindre les objectifs stratégiques en termes de sécurité alimentaire et de réduction des déchets alimentaires, il est impératif de passer à ce modèle d'économie circulaire.

Il est nécessaire d'adopter cette approche sur plusieurs fronts, avec des actions et des interventions à différents niveaux de la chaîne d'approvisionnement agroalimentaire.

Pour appliquer le concept de circularité au secteur alimentaire, il est donc, nécessaire de trouver des solutions pour éliminer les déchets.

Je dois ici saluer l'initiative de l'ONG Food Wise qui lutte activement contre le gaspillage alimentaire à Maurice depuis plus de 4 ans en mettant en relation des entreprises alimentaires locales avec des ONG dans le besoin. Cette initiative assure à ce que les excédents de nourriture ne finissent pas dans les décharges. Je crois comprendre que les principaux donateurs sont des entreprises alimentaires locales qui soutiennent les objectifs de réduction des déchets alimentaires.

Tous les dons sont redistribués afin que ces ressources soient utilisées. Depuis 2018, plus de 4 millions de repas ont été redistribués aux personnes dans le besoin.

Il faut aussi souligner que l'année dernière, la loi sur l'alimentation a été modifiée pour faire la distinction entre la « date d'expiration » et la « date de péremption ».

Avec cette nouvelle loi, les produits peuvent désormais être vendus ou donnés jusqu'à 7 jours après leur date de péremption.

Je citerai également l'initiative de La Decheteque, qui est une plate-forme d'échange de déchets en ligne pour les matériaux de construction fournissant une banque de matériaux de construction de seconde main au niveau local.

Ce sont quelques exemples qui s'inscrivent directement dans notre philosophie d'économie circulaire.

Dans ce nouveau modèle d'économie circulaire, les activités de fabrication et de consommation sont axées sur les 9R: Refuser, Repenser, Réduire, Réutiliser, Réparer, Remettre à neuf, 'Ré-manufacturer', Réutiliser, Recycler et Récupérer.

Il est important de souligner que l'économie circulaire ne se résume pas à un recyclage supplémentaire. Elle demande une refonte dans notre approche dans le but de conserver la valeur des produits et des matériaux le plus longtemps possible dans l'économie. Je parle ici de la durabilité, M. le président.

M. le président, le paragraphe 152 du Programme gouvernemental 2020-2024, indique clairement que notre objectif est de détourner d'ici 2030, environ 70% des déchets générés par les décharges vers une transition écologique. Cet objectif est d'ailleurs repris dans notre Contributions Déterminées au niveau Nationale (NDC) que nous avons soumis au secrétariat de la Convention Cadre sur le Changement Climatique en 2021.

Nous sommes conscients que la réduction de notre dépendance vis-à-vis de la décharge ne peut être obtenue qu'à travers une stratégie bien définie et un plan d'action cohérent.

Dans ce contexte, mon ministère a mandaté une étude, financée par l'Agence française de développement, et qui comprend une nouvelle stratégie et un plan d'action de gestion des déchets solides pour Maurice.

La nouvelle stratégie est axée sur la récupération et le recyclage des ressources. Après des consultations approfondies avec toutes les parties prenantes, une nouvelle stratégie de gestion des déchets solides et de récupération des ressources a été élaborée. Elle vise à maximiser la récupération et le recyclage des ressources à court et moyen termes tout en exploitant le potentiel de récupération d'énergie des déchets à long terme.

Le tri des déchets à la source est considéré comme primordial pour la réussite de cette initiative. L'introduction d'un système systématique de tri et de récupération des déchets générés au niveau des ménages, tels que les déchets de bois, les encombrants, les petits déchets dangereux, entre autres. Ainsi que les mesures légales et financières pour les encourager ont été recommandées à travers cette étude.

Cela assurerait l'approvisionnement continu de ressources non contaminées à l'industrie du recyclage, réduirait la quantité de déchets à enfouir et stimulerait l'économie grâce à la création de nouveaux emplois verts.

Suite aux recommandations du rapport d'étude de faisabilité de l'Agence Française de Développement, mon ministère a fait appel aux services d'un *Transaction Advisor*, à savoir Kukuza Project Development Company Ltd., pour la préparation d'un appel d'offre pour la mise en place et l'exploitation d'une installation intégrée de traitement des déchets (IWPF) sur la base d'un PPP (Private Public Partnership). Cet appel d'offre comprend aussi la construction et l'opération des usines de compostage régionales, des unités de tri et la production de combustible des déchets, le *Refuse Derived Fuel*, en tant que composante optionnelle.

Ceci sera mis en œuvre sur la base d'un partenariat public-privé. Le *Refuse Derived Fuel* exclura les plastiques et le soumissionnaire pourra choisir de produire du *Refuse Derived Fuel* à partir de bois, des déchets verts qui seront ensuite brûlés pour produire de l'électricité en vue de remplacer partiellement le charbon conformément à la politique du gouvernement en matière d'énergie renouvelable. Les appels d'offres ont été lancés le 30 novembre 2022 et seront clôturés le 14 avril 2023. Le dossier d'appel d'offres prévoit que le secteur privé conçoive, finance, construise et exploite les installations de compostages et de centre de tri pendant une période de 25 ans.

Compte tenu de l'investissement considérable qui sera requis par le secteur privé, le gouvernement veillera à ce qu'une quantité garantie de déchets triés soit fournie à l'exploitant de l'installation garantissant ainsi la viabilité du projet.

Le progrès accompli pour jauger le succès du tri à la source et du réacheminement des déchets vers ces installations, seront évalués d'une façon régulière et s'il est nécessaire, des modifications seront apportées au plan d'action.

M. le président, l'exploitation de ces ressources sera accompagnée de la fourniture d'environ trois poubelles aux ménages pour assurer la séparation à la source des différents composants du flux de déchets et d'une vaste campagne d'éducation et de sensibilisation. Ces actions encourageront la population à adhérer à cette initiative et à participer activement à la séparation des matières recyclables, des matières organiques et des déchets résiduels au niveau des ménages.

Entre-temps, un certain nombre d'initiatives ont été déjà prises, par exemple –

- (a) Trois déchetteries ont été construites pour recevoir les déchets triés qui seront par la suite, utilisés comme ressources par les recycleurs, ces trois déchetteries ont été construites à la Chaumière, Poudre D'Or et La Laura. Deux autres régions sont ciblées – la région de Port Louis et La Brasserie à Curepipe ;
- (b) Autre initiative - l'acquisition d'une installation de traitement des pneus usagés sur la base d'un partenariat public-privé est en cours ;
- (c) Une étude de faisabilité sur les usines de biogaz pour la digestion anaérobie des déchets organiques ont été achevées ;
- (d) La fourniture aux ménages de bacs à compost pour le compostage des déchets organiques.

M. le président, les véhicules hors d'usage, qui comprennent des véhicules abandonnés et des véhicules qui sont endommagés complètement, sont un problème majeur à l'île Maurice. Ils sont souvent jetés illégalement sur les terrains vagues et en bordure des routes constituant une véritable '*eye sore*'.

Dans ce contexte, une étude de faisabilité a été commanditée, avec le soutien financier de L'Union Européen à travers l'Africa RISE, pour la mise en place et l'exploitation d'une installation de recyclage des véhicules hors d'usage à Maurice. Cette unité permettra la dépollution, le démontage et le recyclage des véhicules hors d'usage.

L'étude de faisabilité a été achevée et nous sommes en train de travailler conjointement avec le Ministère du *Land Transport and Light Rail* pour la révision du *Road Traffic Act* pour prendre en compte les véhicules en fin de vie. En outre, mon ministère travaille à l'élaboration



d'un règlement prévoyant l'octroi d'une licence pour l'exploitation d'une telle installation de recyclage des véhicules hors d'usages.

Mon ministère prépare également de nouvelles réglementations pour la gestion des déchets électriques et électroniques et pour la collecte et le recyclage des contenants de boissons, y compris les bouteilles en PET, sur la base d'un remboursement de la consigne, dans le cadre du système de la responsabilité élargie des producteurs.

M. le président, mon ministère est également en train de finaliser une feuille de route sur l'économie circulaire à Maurice avec l'aide du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement. Cette feuille de route comprendra le cadre politique proposé avec les principaux catalyseurs, les mesures économiques et financières. Ce nouvel outil juridique nous aidera à mettre en œuvre les politiques et les outils économiques identifiés dans la feuille de route avec un calendrier précis.

M. le Président, malgré la mise en place et l'exploitation de la récupération des matériaux par le biais d'unités de compostage et de tri, il y aura toujours des déchets résiduels à éliminer. Notre objectif est d'assurer un détournement maximal de la mise en décharge des déchets qui a été, jusqu'à présent, la méthode d'élimination finale.

Il convient de souligner que, compte tenu des contraintes liées à l'acquisition de l'espace pour garantir l'enfouissement, l'incinération des déchets pourrait être l'option à envisager à long terme, comme le recommande l'étude de l'Agence Française de Développement.

Toutefois, la mise en œuvre de toute installation d'incinération des déchets pour la production d'énergie représente un gros investissement. Un échec d'un projet de ce genre sera très coûteux. Il est préconisé qu'une étude de faisabilité appropriée qui devra donc être réalisée préalablement à la mise en place d'une telle centrale. Une telle étude devra prendre en considération principalement les quantités futures de déchets compte tenu des changements démographiques et socio-économiques, aussi prendre en considération, et là, il est très important, des valeurs calorifiques et du taux d'humidité des déchets.

La stratégie nationale de gestion des déchets solides et du plan d'action qui seront révisés tous les cinq ans ou à tout autre moment déterminé, comme est prescrit dans ce projet de loi, pourraient reprendre l'option de valorisation énergétique des déchets.

M. le président, à l'échelle mondiale, le secteur de la gestion des déchets représente environ 3,5 % des émissions anthropiques de gaz à effet de serre. De nombreux pays ont adopté des politiques en vue de réduire les déchets et de promouvoir l'économie circulaire. Le rapport des Nations Unies sur les Objectifs de Développement Durable, les ODD, de 2022 indique que les modes de consommation et de production non durables sont à l'origine de la triple crise mondiale du changement climatique, de la perte de la biodiversité et de la pollution. De telles crises et la dégradation de l'environnement qui en résulte, menacent le bien-être humain et la réalisation des Objectifs de Développement Durable.

La récupération des ressources fournit donc, non seulement une base importante pour atteindre surtout les Objectifs de Développement Durable numéro 12 (consommation et production durables), mais également des étapes significatives pour atteindre les autres ODDs tels que l'ODD 6 (eau propre et assainissement), l'ODD 13 (combattre le changement climatique), l'ODD 11 (villes et communautés sûres, résilientes et durables) et l'ODD 14 (vie sous l'eau), entre autres.

M. le président, actuellement, il n'y a pas de législation dédiée à Maurice à la gestion des déchets solides. Les réglementations relatives aux flux de déchets spécifiques ainsi que les dispositions générales sont éparpillées dans la loi sur les collectivités locales, le *Local Government Act* et la loi sur la protection de l'environnement, l'*Environment Protection Act*. La situation actuelle a donc abouti à une approche fragmentée de la gestion des déchets solides.

Il était donc, grand temps que toutes les dispositions légales relatives aux déchets solides et dangereux soient regroupées dans un seul cadre juridique. Ce projet de loi sera un texte législatif harmonisé et comblera les lacunes existantes.

Il fournira une orientation stratégique et des *guidelines* sur les pratiques de gestion durable des déchets solides et dangereux, conformément aux principes de l'économie circulaire.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, de souligner que cette nouvelle loi a été préparée par deux consultants internationaux avec l'aide financière généreuse du Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement (PNUD). Des consultations ont été menées avec toutes les parties prenantes par le biais d'ateliers de travail et de validation.

M. le président, les éléments clés de cette législation concernent la prévention de la production des déchets en premier lieu. De ce fait, cette nouvelle loi qui concerne la gestion des déchets ainsi que la récupération des ressources pourra être considéré comme le tremplin vers la mise en œuvre d'une approche d'économie circulaire dans le secteur des déchets solides à Maurice.

Il dynamisera et renforcera l'industrie du recyclage à Maurice qui en est encore à ses balbutiements. Avoir plus de capacité pour recycler, réutiliser ou ré-manufacturer les déchets, rendra plus solide la base d'une industrie élargie du recyclage et de la gestion des ressources. Ainsi, la création d'emplois verts dans le retraitement, le tri et la collecte des matériaux connaîtra une croissance.

M. le président, l'élaboration de stratégies et d'actions, leur révision et l'application des nouvelles dispositions du projet de loi nécessitent une structure institutionnelle forte.

Les articles 4 à 7 du projet de loi prévoient la création d'un département de la gestion des déchets et de la récupération des ressources. Ce département sera le régulateur exclusif pour la gestion des déchets et aura des responsabilités élargies allant du développement des politiques et stratégies nationales à l'octroi de licences.

Le département disposera d'un personnel adéquat et compétent pour s'acquitter des tâches et des responsabilités prévues par ce projet de loi.

L'article 9 du projet de loi prévoit également la création d'un comité national de coordination pour la gestion des déchets avec tous les acteurs concernés. Ce comité assurera la coordination et la coopération entre les services gouvernementaux, les autorités locales et les autres institutions engagées dans la gestion des déchets, les projets et programmes d'économie circulaire. Il surveillera et examinera également les progrès et les réalisations dans la mise en œuvre de la stratégie et du plan d'action nationaux de gestion des déchets solides.

M. le président, l'article 15 du projet de loi fournit des orientations spécifiques et des éléments à prendre en compte pour déterminer si des matériaux et produits spécifiés doivent être considérés comme des déchets ou plutôt comme un produit ou une matière première secondaire. Cette distinction est d'une importance capitale pour remplir deux objectifs, à savoir, la protection de l'environnement et le maintien de l'industrie du recyclage.

L'article 16 de ce projet de loi prévoit la préparation d'une stratégie nationale régulière de gestion des déchets solides et de plans d'action, ce qui n'est pas prévu dans notre cadre juridique actuel. La stratégie sera appelée à être réexaminée tous les 5 ans et le plan d'action réexaminé tous les 5 ans.

Les principes et le contenu de la stratégie et du plan d'action ont également été définis dans le projet de loi. Il veillera à ce que les mécanismes et programmes à mettre en œuvre soient conformes aux principes de circularité.

M. le président, la partie VI du projet de loi prévoit les devoirs et les pouvoirs des autorités locales. Les autorités locales jouent un rôle crucial pour assurer le nettoyage et la propreté dans le pays. Ils ont toujours fourni un service efficace de collecte des déchets, soit en interne, soit en sous-traitance, soit grâce à une combinaison des deux méthodes, dans toute l'île pour assurer que nos déchets soient collectés chez les ménages et les commerces afin de protéger la santé publique.

De telles pratiques ont assuré pendant des années un état de propreté dans le pays. Le niveau de prestation de services a été amélioré au fil des années pour répondre au rapide développement économique et urbain et pour répondre aussi aux nouvelles attentes d'une société dynamique.

M. le président, avec ce nouveau projet de loi, les autorités locales seront appelées à jouer un rôle crucial dans les concepts de circularité et d'approche intégrée des déchets, et il est logique qu'elles soient incluses dans le processus de décision politique.

Les articles 23 à 26 du projet de loi prévoient la collecte et le transport des déchets ménagers et commerciaux par les autorités locales. La séparation des déchets dans les locaux du producteur, en amont dans la chaîne de gestion des déchets, est important pour garantir que les matériaux de valeur qui peuvent être réinjectés dans l'économie ne soient pas contaminés et puissent ainsi conserver leur valeur économique pour la circularité.

Les autorités locales seront appelées à acquérir et à déployer des véhicules appropriés pour collecter les déchets séparés de manière efficace. Une campagne de sensibilisation approfondie sera menée pour éduquer la population sur la manière de trier les déchets à la

source. Et là, nous comptons sur la collaboration de tous les secteurs de l'économie, et bien sûr, du secteur éducatif aussi.

La soumission régulière d'informations sur la production de déchets, la disponibilité des ressources, humaines et matérielles, et les coûts de gestion des déchets est une obligation, en vertu de l'article 17, pour les autorités locales dans le cadre de la stratégie et du plan d'action nationaux pour la gestion des déchets solides.

M. le président, nous ne devons pas oublier les générateurs de déchets. Ici, M. le président, un changement de mentalité et d'attitude s'impose. Les producteurs de déchets sont appelés à assumer un rôle plus responsable dans la récupération des matériaux.

Les articles 18 et 19 du projet de loi définissent les devoirs et obligations des producteurs de déchets et des institutions en matière de gestion des déchets, conformément aux principes susmentionnés.

Le projet de loi prévoit des dispositions pour les institutions générant plus de 10 m<sup>3</sup> de déchets par semaine. Des obligations supplémentaires concernant les plans de séparation, de recyclage et d'élimination sûre des déchets, ainsi que la tenue de registres et l'établissement de rapports, sont imposées à ces grands producteurs de déchets.

M. le président, les articles 27 à 32 de la partie VII du projet de loi portent sur la gestion des déchets dangereux et prévoient que toute personne qui produit, manipule ou gère des déchets dangereux doit s'assurer que les déchets soient gérés d'une manière qui protège la santé humaine et l'environnement, et bien sûr, contre les effets néfastes de ces déchets.

Les nouvelles dispositions vont nous permettre de mieux respecter nos obligations aux traités internationaux. Celles-ci concernent la convention de Bâle sur le contrôle des mouvements transfrontalières de déchets dangereux et de leur élimination et, celle de la convention de Bamako sur l'interdiction d'importer en Afrique et sur le contrôle des mouvements transfrontalières et la gestion des déchets dangereux en Afrique.

De plus, les articles 27 à 29 prévoient que des règlements pourront être promulgués en ce qu'il s'agit de –

- déclarer quels déchets peuvent être prescrits comme déchets dangereux ;

- les contrôles de la collecte, du transport, du stockage, de la manutention, du prétraitement, de la récupération et de l'élimination des déchets dangereux et de leur traçabilité de la génération à la destination finale ;
- s'assurer qu'au cours de la collecte, du transport et du stockage temporaire, les déchets dangereux sont classés, séparés, emballés et étiquetés conformément aux normes internationales en vigueur.

Les dispositions susmentionnées ont pour objet d'assurer la gestion écologiquement rationnelle des déchets dangereux. Des directives et des prescriptions techniques minimales seront établies de la collecte à la récupération et à l'élimination des déchets dangereux de manière à assurer la protection de la santé humaine et de l'environnement.

M. le président, par ailleurs, conformément au principe du pollueur-payeur, le projet de loi sur la gestion des déchets et la récupération des ressources prévoit des réglementations pour la perception de redevances pour la gestion des déchets dangereux.

Ainsi, l'article 30 du projet de loi prévoit le recouvrement des dépenses, auprès des producteurs d'un déchet dangereux, pour prévenir, éliminer ou réduire les effets néfastes des déchets dangereux sur la santé publique et l'environnement. Il prévoit également le recouvrement des coûts de toute opération de nettoyage dans le cas où les déchets dangereux représentent un risque immédiat pour la santé humaine et l'environnement. Les déchets dangereux sont également générés par les ménages. Cependant, il n'existe actuellement aucun système établi pour leur collecte.

L'article 31 du projet de loi prévoit que des dispositions spéciales doivent être prises par le département pour la collecte séparée des déchets dangereux générés par les ménages afin de garantir qu'ils ne contaminent pas d'autres flux de déchets et qu'ils soient gérés d'une manière écologiquement rationnelle. J'aimerais préciser que le nouveau contrat d'exploitation de l'entreposage des déchets dangereux de La Chaumière prévoit la collecte et le traitement des déchets ménagers dangereux. Cela garantira que les déchets triés au niveau des ménages qui seront utilisés comme matière première pour le compostage et le recyclage ne soient pas contaminés par des déchets dangereux. C'est une préoccupation qui a toujours été soulevée par les utilisateurs locaux de compost et qui sera abordée par le biais de ce projet de loi.

L'article 32 du projet de loi prévoit l'élaboration d'une stratégie et du plan d'action de gestion des déchets dangereux pour lesquels il n'existe pas de disposition juridique de ce type jusqu'à présent.

La stratégie de gestion des déchets dangereux ici aussi doit être révisée tous les 10 ans tandis que le plan d'action doit être révisé tous les 5 ans.

M. le président, l'article 46 du projet de loi prévoit la mise en place et la mise en œuvre du système de responsabilité élargie des producteurs (REP), le *Extended Producers Responsibility*.

La REP est une approche de politique environnementale dans laquelle la responsabilité d'un fabricant pour un produit particulier ne se limite pas au processus de production et de la profitabilité du produit mais s'étend à l'étape post-consommation du produit, y compris la reprise, la réutilisation ou le recyclage et le traitement final. En tant que tel, le système REP transfère la responsabilité de la gestion des déchets des agences gouvernementales aux importateurs et producteurs du produit.

M. le président, assurer l'application et le respect des règles sont au cœur de cette nouvelle législation. L'intention de cette législation et des réglementations qui en découleront est d'orienter les comportements vers des pratiques moins gaspilleuses. Toutes les autorités compétentes seront habilitées à appliquer pleinement les différentes dispositions.

En outre, des dispositions spécifiques sont disponibles pour les déchets dangereux qui doivent être gérés séparément des déchets solides en raison de leurs impacts potentiellement élevés sur la santé humaine et l'environnement. Le projet de loi prévoit en outre des infractions et des peines correspondantes en cas de contravention à ses dispositions.

M. le président, l'article 50 prévoit un pouvoir réglementaire pour soutenir ce projet de loi.

L'article 52 prévoit des modifications de la loi sur les collectivités locales et de l'*Environment Protection Act* et de la loi sur le contrôle des produits chimiques dangereux.

La section 59 du *Local Government Act* sera abrogée, étant donné que les responsabilités en matière d'élaboration de politiques et de stratégies relatives aux déchets relèveront désormais du ministère de la gestion des déchets et de la récupération des ressources.

En outre, la collecte de certains déchets dangereux par les autorités locales sera désormais soumise à l'approbation du département de la gestion des déchets et de la récupération des ressources.

La loi sur les collectivités locales est également modifiée pour prévoir l'obligation des collectivités locales de soumettre les informations nécessaires pour permettre l'élaboration de la stratégie et le plan d'action national en matière de gestion des déchets solides.

L'article 53 prévoit la révocation des règlements en matière de déchets solides et dangereux émanant de l'*Environment Protection Act* et du *Local Government Act*. Toutefois, la révocation ne sera effective qu'une fois que les *regulations* correspondants auront été finalisés dans le cadre de cette nouvelle loi. Une période de transition sera ainsi accordée pour s'assurer d'une bonne transition. Je tiens à préciser que mon ministère a déjà commencé à travailler sur les amendements à être apportés aux différents *regulations* comme mentionnés à l'article 53.

M. le président, je ne peux pas, en présentant ce projet de loi, faire abstraction de ce qui s'est passé à la décharge de Mare Chicose l'année dernière. L'incendie qui s'est déclaré à la décharge est une autre raison importante pour soutenir ce projet de loi, car il garantira que tous les types de déchets ne soient pas déversés sans discernement dans la décharge. Mes collègues des deux côtés de la Chambre savent peut-être que les déchets organiques biodégradables mis en décharge subissent une dégradation d'un anaérobie qui entraîne la libération de méthane, un gaz hautement inflammable qui augmente également la température dans la masse de déchets une fois libérée. De plus, les risques d'incendie associés sont exacerbés par la présence de combustibles tels que les plastiques et le papier.

Ce projet de loi sera donc un instrument de base qui favorisera le détournement des déchets organiques biodégradables et recyclables vers des installations dédiées telles que des usines de compostage, des usines de digestion d'anaérobie et des installations de tri et de recyclage. Ce faisant, les risques d'incendie au site d'enfouissement seront grandement réduits.

L'atténuation des impacts du changement climatique représente l'un des défis environnementaux les plus importants. L'augmentation de la réutilisation, du recyclage et du compostage représente une opportunité sensible pour réduire les gaz à effet de serre et lutter contre le changement climatique.



Ce projet de loi apportera une révolution dans le secteur de la gestion des déchets solides.

Nous cherchons à réaliser le potentiel économique de l'innovation dans les technologies de récupération des déchets et des ressources, tout en protégeant notre environnement grâce à la réduction des émissions et à une meilleure utilisation de nos ressources naturelles.

Ce gouvernement s'est engagé à fournir le bon cadre pour attirer les investissements, stimuler l'innovation et créer des emplois verts. Cette nouvelle législation apportera une certitude réglementaire et des règles de jeu plus équitables qui favoriseront une croissance accrue du secteur de la récupération des ressources.

Ce gouvernement, sous la direction du Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, s'efforce de moderniser la gestion de nos déchets solides conformément aux meilleures pratiques mondiales en jetant des bases solides pour qu'un changement de paradigme se produise en matière de déchets solides.

Je tiens, ici, à rappeler à la Chambre que les résolutions EA.4/Res.1 et EA.5/Res.11, adoptées par l'Assemblée des Nations Unies pour l'environnement, lors de ses quatrième et cinquième sessions, décrivent la circularité comme permettant l'émergence d'une économie « dans laquelle les produits et les matériaux sont conçus de manière qu'ils peuvent être utilisés, ré-manufacturés, recyclés et valorisés. Et ainsi maintenus dans l'économie aussi longtemps que possible, ainsi que les ressources dont ils sont constituées et la génération de déchets, en particulier de déchets dangereux, est évitée ou minimisée et les émissions de gaz à effet de serre sont évitées ou réduites ».

Ce projet de loi s'efforce d'atteindre ceci, M. le président.

M. le président, ce projet de loi constitue un tournant décisif dans la gestion des déchets dans le pays. Il établit l'infrastructure juridique nécessaire pour nous permettre à faire face aux défis futurs et de renforcer notre résilience.

M. le président, les amendements mineurs que je compte proposer au *Committee Stage* ont été déjà circulés. J'invite mes collègues, les députés des deux côtés de la Chambre, à contribuer dans le débat et à apporter leurs suggestions à ce projet de loi. Permettez-moi également de remercier toutes les parties prenantes qui ont contribué à l'élaboration du projet de

loi par leurs commentaires et suggestions valables dans le processus des consultations qui ont été menées.

Sur ces mots, M. le président, je recommande le projet de loi à la Chambre. Merci.

**The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.**

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

(5.28 p.m.)

**Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Waste Management and Resource Recovery Bill comes at a very opportune time. There has indeed been question in recent days on a lot of wastage of public funds and of course, I am referring to the observation made by the Director of Audit in his last report. In this context, an 'Anti-Waste Management and Financial Resources Recovery Bill' seems to be more urgent, that is, the recovery of public funds. I will have the opportunity to come back to the negative impact on this unbridled waste of public funds on the circular economy later, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, pour le moment, je vais me limiter à la gestion des déchets solides. Selon un rapport publié conjointement par *Business Mauritius* et le Programme des Nations unies pour le développement - et là, je vais me référer à ce rapport durant mon intervention, surtout les bases de données que contient le rapport - la gestion des déchets solides est l'une des principaux défis environnementaux à laquelle Maurice est confrontée, en partie en raison des modes de production et de consommation non-durable et du modèle commercial linéaire traditionnel. Les déchets solides ont augmenté de 29% entre 2010 et 2020 et de plus de 100 % au cours des vingt dernières années.

Avec une population de 1.2 millions d'habitants, la quantité moyenne de déchets solides par habitant éliminée quotidiennement à la décharge a augmenté régulièrement, passant de 0.6 kilos en 2000 à 1.1 kilos en 2019, générant environ 537,147 tonnes par an. En 2019, les déchets étaient le deuxième plus grand contributeur aux émissions de gaz à effet de serre, estimés à 23% après les émissions d'énergies fossiles qui s'élèvent à 74.2%. Environ 95% des déchets provenaient des ménages et des activités commerciales, 3% du secteur industriel et le reste du secteur de la construction. Le gouvernement dépense environ R 1.5 milliards et le ministre nous

a dit R 1.8 milliards par an pour l'exploitation et entretien des stations de transfert et du site d'enfouissement ainsi que pour le transport des déchets vers les décharges. Le rapport tire la sonnette d'alarme car l'île Maurice est actuellement confrontée à des graves défis environnementaux tels que l'augmentation du niveau de déchets, principalement due à des systèmes de production et de consommation non-durable et à la population, due à la consommation croissante d'énergies fossiles.

Force est de constater, M. le président, que la situation est alarmante et je vais donner des exemples. Les pneus usagés sont parmi les sources de déchets les plus problématiques. La quantité des pneus usagés éliminée reste importante. Selon les chiffres de recyclage déclarés, 647.7 tonnes ont été réchappées en 2019. Pourtant en 2019, 564 tonnes de pneus en caoutchouc ont atterri à la décharge de Mare Chicose et par rapport au nombre de véhicules à l'île Maurice, ces chiffres représentent environ 10% selon les informations. Une grande quantité est donc éliminée autour l'île, donc, dans la nature. Il nous convient de mentionner que les pneus neufs figurent parmi les 20 importations des marchandises les plus importés à l'île Maurice.

Parallèlement, ce qu'on appelle le *e-waste*, les déchets électroniques, également appelés déchets d'équipements électriques et électroniques, comprennent les ordinateurs, les ordinateurs portables, les imprimantes, les télécopieurs et les appareils ménagers tels que les réfrigérateurs, les machines à laver, téléviseurs, radios destinés à être jetés. La consommation de ces produits a augmenté massivement au fil des ans et cette tendance devrait se poursuivre à l'avenir. Les déchets électroniques comprennent généralement les métaux ferreux, plastique, le verre, les cartes, les circuits imprimés et d'autres articles.

D'après une analyse des données du département des douanes de *Statistics Mauritius* et d'enquêtes auprès des grossistes et consommateurs, l'étude a estimé que la quantité de ces déchets était de 6,571 tonnes en 2008 mais que seulement 1,600 tonnes avaient été jetées dans les décharges. Cela représentait 5.6 kg par habitant à Maurice en 2008. Celle-ci était estimée à 6.2 kilos en 2011. D'après une présentation de la division de la gestion des déchets solides sur les responsabilités élargies des producteurs sur les équipements électroniques, il est indiqué qu'environ 8,000 tonnes sont générées chaque année, soit environ 6.4 kg par habitant. Une très faible quantité des déchets électroniques est actuellement recyclée localement – 115 tonnes seulement en 2019 selon les chiffres officiels. En utilisant un chiffre de 8,000 tonnes, il existe

donc un énorme potentiel de création de plus d'intrants dans les matières premières secondaires à partir des déchets électroniques non traités restant.

Aussi, M. le président, il y a le problème d'huile de moteur. Compte tenu du nombre croissant de véhicules et du niveau des activités industrielles, l'élimination aléatoire des huiles de moteur usagées autour de l'île a de forts impacts négatifs sur l'environnement. L'huile usée attire une variété de contaminants dangereux lorsqu'elle est utilisée dans les moteurs et les transmissions et peut potentiellement contaminer les eaux souterraines. Maurice importe des tonnes d'huile moteur chaque année mais il y a actuellement aucune collecte officielle, il n'y a pas de traçabilité de l'endroit où va l'huile de moteur usagée, M. le président.

M. le président, nous voyons que les éboueurs qui sillonnent les rues de nos villes et villages à bord des camions, comme on dit, *ramas salte*, accomplissent une tâche difficile au service de la santé publique. Ils sont parfois contraints d'effectuer leurs tâches dans des conditions les plus déshumanisantes. Leurs tâches se compliquent en l'absence des normes basiques telles que la non utilisation systématique des sacs-poubelle et des déchets organiques non triés.

Et pourtant, M. le président, sous *l'Environment Protection Act*, on prévoit des standards –

“43. *Standards for non-hazardous wastes*

(1) *The Minister shall prescribe standards for the collection, transportation, storage, processing, disposal and re-cycling of non-hazardous wastes.*”

Je ne sais pas, M. le président, si tel règlement est appliqué. Il est urgent d'humaniser le travail de ces hommes et femmes et d'assurer leur sécurité de travail.

Les déchets ménagers collectés par des départements de la santé publique et des collectivités locales étaient initialement cheminés vers des dépotoirs à ciel ouvert, occasionnant diverses formes de pollution, dont des incendies causants énormes dégâts.

Avec la création d'un centre d'enfouissement de Mare Chicose, le business '*ramas salte*' est devenu lucratif et les dépotoirs étaient devenus des mines d'argent. La collecte, le transfert et le déchet de la gestion du site d'enfouissement sont devenus une filière, un filon en raison de juteux contrats. Je constate malheureusement qu'au niveau de la gestion des déchets, ce sont les considérations financières qui ont préséance sur les considérations écologiques et toute la

stratégie vise à transformer la gestion des déchets en une industrie brassant des millions, sinon des milliards, en offrant des contrats mirobolants.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to a study by the World Bank, lower income countries spend about 35 USD per ton and sometimes higher on waste operation. In Mauritius, the figure would be around 45 USD per ton. It is indeed quite a lot of resources that are required for the waste sector. With the abolition of the Municipal rates, Central Government has no partial recovery of cost and has to foot wholly the Bill. The present Bill today in this House is nothing but a scheme to reintroduce a Municipal and a Rural Tax under a different name through the backdoor. Let me come to the Section 23 of the Bill, Collection of Waste –

“(2) A local authority may, for the purpose of subsection (1) and with the approval of the Minister, prescribe a fee for the collection and disposal of household waste, commercial waste and industrial waste.”

*M. le président, c'est une taxe dans les villes et les villages sous l'emballage de l'économie circulaire. Cost recovery for waste differs drastically around the world. User fees range from around \$35 per year in low income countries to \$170 USD per year in high income countries. How will this fee be determined, Mr Speaker, Sir?*

According to the 2022 Housing Census, there was a total of 329 buildings and 411,700 housing units and 365,000 private households were enumerated in the Republic of Mauritius. *C'est une manne de plusieurs millions, sinon des milliards chaque année. Une unité de recyclage sera mise sur pied et recyclera peut-être 10% des déchets. Toute la presse en parlera et on montrera quelques produits recyclés à la télé, un gros battage médiatique, un gros budget, au nom de l'écologie financée par les pollueurs payeurs qui passeront le bill au consommateur. Mais les 90% restants, M. le président, il faut réfléchir par rapport à cela. La section 24, Receptacles for household waste –*

“A local authority may, for the purpose of section 23 and segregation at source, by notice served on the occupier of any household premises, require him to place waste meant for collection by the local authority in such number of receptacles which shall be of such type as may be specified in the notice.

(2) A local authority may, at the request of any person, supply him, on payment of such fee as may be prescribed by it, with the approval of the Minister, with receptacles and roll-on-roll-off trucks for the collection of household waste.”

Avant, c’était les collectivités locales qui fournissaient gratuitement les poubelles. Maintenant, c’est le ministre qui va décider qui va avoir les poubelles, M. le président. 400 000 ménages par trois poubelles et 1 000 roupies par poubelle. Faites le calcul ; cela vous fait 1.2 milliards de roupies pour les poubelles, un marché énorme se chiffrant, comme je vous ai dit, à plus d’un milliard de roupies, d’autant que l’argent va forcément attirer beaucoup de *businessmen* à l’affût d’une fiesta assurée. Il faut que cette distribution soit faite de façon équitable et non politisée, M. le président.

The Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to provide for the regulatory framework to ensure the environmentally safe and sound management of solid waste and hazardous waste and a sustainable waste management system through the adoption of a circular economy approach, focusing on waste reduction, reuse treatment, safe disposal, material recovery and recycling. The only new element, Mr Speaker, Sir, in this beautiful narrative is the circular economy approach, a buzz word that has been around for some time. *Le gouvernement, à travers ce projet de loi, dresse la table pour une privatisation à grande échelle des opérations relatives à la gestion des déchets rendues attrayantes par un cost recovery mechanism sous le nouvel emballage de circular economy.*

A circular economy aims to maintain the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use while minimizing the generation of waste. The fewer products we discard, the lesser material we extract, the better for our environment.

The circular economy has become a go-to-concept that has caught the attention of all sectors of society in the recent years and has become popular, especially in Government and corporate sectors. Given the socio-ecological challenges, namely climate change and biodiversity lost the concept of CE could indeed in theory help the transition to a sustainable just and resilient future. But this is in theory. What about in practice? The actual definition, objectives and norms of implementation of the CE are still unclear, inconsistent and contested. I shall rapidly elaborate on some diverging views on the circular economy.

With the inequalities and wealth which exist at the moment, an ecological ambition is almost impossible. Some social and environmental scientists argue that we need to construct new norms of social, educational, fiscal and climate justice for democratic discussions. No ecological transition is possible with the present hyper concentration of economic power.

On the contrary, the economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be based on the permanent circulation of power, wealth and knowledge. Different actors and sectors tend to align the circular economy concept with their interests, which often do not sufficiently examine the ecological, social and political implications of circularity.

Nevertheless, most of the CE speeches have actually been developed by actors in the Government and private sectors which have specific political and economic agendas. I have often used CE as a narrative device for brainwashing. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the circular economy is based on an ideological agenda dominated by technical and economic accounts which bring uncertain contribution to the sustainability and of sustainable growth. Due to the immense challenges and limitations of recycling and recovery activities, a fully CE might be just an illusion, that is, circular economy would require capping global resource used at a certain sustainable level so that the economy can run only on recovered and renewable sources.

Yet, considering the large unmet needs of over 45% of the global population, which remains in poverty worldwide, according to the World Bank in 2019, capping materials resources used are critical, geopolitical dimension necessitates an essential reconsideration of normative questions regarding global justice well-being, worldwide, wealth distribution.

Research has found that many production system that defines them as circular can lead to greater environmental impacts than their linear counterparts. Transforming consumption and production structures based on materialism, convenience and ownership to one's based on collaborative consumption sharing economies and used values easier said than done. More households according to the CSO are leaving the neighbourhood shops to buy groceries from supermarkets and hypermarkets, 91% in 2017 against 82% in 2012. Can circular economy emerge in a throwaway economy and a consumer society based on planned obsolescence of good designed to break quickly or become obsolete in the short to midterm?

**Mr Speaker:** Finished?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** I am almost done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As capitalism cannot operate in a context of de-growth, this would mean that a fully CE is also inherently incompatible with the current productivist economic system. Other vitally important questions such as whether, the CE will lead to more meaningful jobs, closer communities, greater social equity and global solidarity or rather to increase precarity, inequality and neo colonialism need to be addressed. Many initiatives could have been taken if the Government was truly committed to the set rolling of an ecological transition in the solid waste.

Greenhouse gas emission contributes directly or indirectly to global warming. The energy sector remains the largest contributing sector and accounted to 79.3% of the total emission followed by the waste sector with 10.9%, almost 50% of the waste generated is organic. Composting of organic and green waste could contribute to a substantial decrease in volume of waste landfill and thereby decreasing the volume generated. Mr Speaker, Sir, the reliance upon chemical fertilizers can hence be reduced.

Mauritius is a small island of around 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> with a small population. We cannot just copy and paste any kind of strategy which is done elsewhere and apply it without any clear strategic direction and detailed budgeting. What are the financial implications and the expected quantitative and qualitative results of this project? Has any timeframe been set, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Our small size and our long tradition of local government can provide a suitable environment for implementing a safe and sound, decentralised and cost effective, and low carbon waste collection with effective participation. It is not because collection and disposal of waste is vital to the society that this sector should rather be transformed in a money making machine.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, piecemeal approach does not work on the environmental front. It is not a question of green patch working now and then or here and there. Relevant Ministries and enforcing agencies should plan, act and operate in symbiosis and performance indicators monitor.

I am done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for 45 minutes.

*At 5.51 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 6.43 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*



**Mr Speaker:** Please be seated!

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**HON. P. BÉRENGER - NAMING**

I wish to remind the House that earlier today, I named the hon. Paul Bérenger in view of his conduct towards the Chair.

**MOTIONS – S.O. 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)**

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. Paul Bérenger, I beg under Standing Order 17(3) to take the time of the House for urgent business.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, having obtained your permission, I beg to move under Standing Order 29(1) to present a motion without notice.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. Paul Bérenger, I beg to move that the hon. Paul Bérenger be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's Sitting and the next five Sittings unless unreserved apologies are tendered to the House.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Nuckcheddy!

(6.44 p.m.)

**Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil):** Thank you, Mr Speaker Sir. This Bill, on which I have the privilege to intervene today, is about providing for a regulatory framework to ensure the environmentally safe and sound management of solid waste and hazardous waste, and a sustainable waste management system through the adoption of a circular economy approach focusing on waste reduction, reuse, treatment, safe disposal, material recovery and recycling.

It goes without saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are talking of the Planet Earth but, please, allow me to start by the moon. Despite that man has never established a permanent residence on the moon; however, the brief passage has generated, as per the Royal Museum of Greenwich, 96 bags of human waste. Another online source lists the various items - which I am not going to cite here - but those various items which have been left on the moon as waste are estimated to sum to about 200,000 kg. Our planet, Mr Speaker, Sir, is becoming a dwelling of waste debris due to our unsustainable production and consumption practices. On top of that, the escalated growth rate of the human population combined with the rapidly growing urbanisation and increased living standards have further triggered the situation in all the four corners of the globe. This is a serious matter, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the prediction for the future is very alarming.

In 2020, the waste generated globally amounted to 2 billion tonnes, and you know, this 2 billion is expected to grow to 3.4 billion tonnes by the year 2050. Earlier, the hon. Minister Ramano pointed out that last year, Mauritius, sent 500,000 tonnes of wastes to landfills and which is to increase by 30% by the year 2030.

The orator from the other side of the house, hon. Aadil Ameer Meea who intervened just before me, cited some figures which don't tally with mine but they are not far. When we compare the wastes of 2022 to 2010, we see that there has been an increase of 17%. 17% in 12 years and now, in the future we are expecting this to grow by 30%.

This is a very alarming situation and we have to do something on that. It is the responsibility of all of us as we have borrowed this planet from the future generation; we have to give it back to them. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is good news. In fact, there are two good news. The first one is that we still got time and secondly, our country has a caring and responsible government.

This Bill Mr Speaker, Sir, is actually proposing what is actually needed. It is a paradigm shift from the depletive ‘produce-consume-dispose’ model of the linear economy of the 3Rs, that is the ‘Reduce, Reuse, Recycle’ to the nine ‘Rs’ model ‘Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recycle, Recover’ and these are the nine ‘Rs’ of the circular economy, which is a more regenerative and restorative approach.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs which is also known as the Global Goals. It was in fact a universal call among others for an action to protect the planet. Mauritius, together with 193 Member states, adopted the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development.

The United Nations came with 17 SDGs which are integrated; they reckon that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

This regulatory framework Mr Speaker, Sir, is in fact devising a road map to attain the 17 SDGs. It is an action plan to ensure the safe and sound environment. It is coming with measures to establish an inclusive society and nation as it talks about Circular Economy and Solid Waste Management is a crosscutting problem that influences different facets of growth in all three domains of sustainability: Environment, Economy, and Society. One may think that this Bill is just about wastes. No, it’s not only that Mr Speaker, Sir. It is about meeting the SDGs and thus, a stepping stone to end poverty, hunger, diseases and discriminations.

The regulatory framework is what we need and I say it again. This is what we need and not MID which was a BMW – you know what I mean by BMW, Mr Speaker, Sir, – Big Money Waste. In a forum held in Berlin on Chemicals and Sustainability in 2021, Achim Steiner, the UNDP Administrator, mentioned –

“If we are to build forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic towards a green economy, we must ramp-up global efforts to minimize the negative impact of chemicals and wastes. Part of the solution lies in circular economy approaches. This will offer new opportunities to decarbonize our economies.”

As a society, we are beginning to understand that we urgently need to reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods and resources.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, clearly elaborates on how it is going to achieve and bring results making products reusable through lifespan extension activities along the value chain. For this to happen, we need a paradigm shift as it entails making manufacturers redesign their production strategies and processes as well as current business models to produce more durable, repairable, recyclable products. Moreover, raising consumer awareness and engagement is essential to transforming consumption patterns and encouraging behavioural change to increase demand for reuse or reusable as a strong Sustainable Consumption Production and this is only what can bring a key role in achieving a circular economy and meet human needs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of Waste Management does not only concern the Ministry of Environment. It is a matter of concern for all us. In part II of the Bill under Section 4, 2(b), it is clear that the Department of Waste Management and Resource Recovery, which will be within the Ministry, shall work together and assist the local authorities in implementation of the Waste Management Programme.

Having laws is a good thing but more important is the enforcement and this Bill does provide for that. The same section of the Bill at subsection d (ii), provides for regulation of private operators in the field of Waste Management.

Mr Speaker, Sir, very often when we talk of waste management, we believe that it just concerns getting rid of it out of our compound and then we are discharged with our responsibility. This Bill Mr Speaker, Sir, allows the Department the power under Section 4, subsection 2 (p) to not accept such wastes at landfills that can be re-used or recycle. Not only that Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be technical acceptance criteria of the public waste management facility that all wastes have to pass before being accepted at landfills.

Earlier I mentioned enforcement. So much important is the monitoring as well, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, the Department shall, within one month from the beginning of every financial year, submit to the Minister a report on the projects and activities undertaken by the Department in the preceding financial year as per Section 4, subsection (4).

Many a times we have heard the Opposition alleging that authorities are being set so as to enable the Government to appoint our people and we have to be careful here, Mr Speaker, Sir, because when I listened to hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, who just intervened before me, you can again see that Members on the other side of the House are trying to put things out of context. We

have seen how he mentioned the disguised tax and all the things which are not really true. Coming from a Party, which is the MMM, you cannot expect better. And, now that we are talking about the Waste Management and Resources Recovery, if you allow me to do an analogy, you can look on this side of the House and you will see that the Government has recovered the resources of MMM and what is left over is only the wastes. So, this Bill provides that the Director of the Department will be appointed by the Public Service Commission.

So, the National Waste Management Coordination Committee as per Part III of the Bill provides for the purpose of this Act.

I see hon. Ivan Collendavelloo laughing. He is one of the resources in fact.

So, the National Waste Management Coordination Committee as per Part III of the Bill provides for the purpose of this Act, a National Waste Management Coordination Committee which shall promote –

- waste reduction;
- resource conversion, and
- material recovery.

All these with a view to achieve a circular economy and this committee will be chaired by the Minister.

The immediate goal in this post-pandemic era or when the pandemic is ebbing out would be to revive economic activity without restoring old trends of environmental deterioration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we talk of circular economy, we first of all need to know what ‘circular economy’ means. The ‘circular economy’ can be defined as a regenerative system in which resource, input and wastes, emission and energy leakage are minimised by slowing, closing and narrowing material and energy loops.

Incorporating circular economy principles in waste management systems can enable the recovery of economic growth. Experts believe that the circular economy system strives to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development, economic, environmental and social through a symbiotic approach to recover energy and material from waste, design durable products and extend the service life of systems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Ellen MacArthur stated the following concerning the circular economy –

“The circular economy reflects a structural change that creates long-term stability, maximises the usage and circulation of commodities, resources, and nutrients while providing economic, environmental, and societal benefits that help the public and private sectors address both short and long-term objectives of SDGs.”

This regenerative model can bring a balanced integration of economic performance, social inclusiveness, and environmental resilience, to the benefit of current and future generations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the experts know better than us, so we need technical know-how for a proper implementation. So, big thanks go to the hon. Minister, who has included in this Bill, provisions for a Technical Advisory Committee under the Section 12. The Technical Committee will have the obligation to provide advice and recommendation on any matter specified by the Minister.

Now, Part V, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the waste management measures, the Sub-part A is about Integrated Waste Management and Circularity Principles. The objective, of which will be to aim at –

“(a) preventing and minimising the harmful or adverse effects of waste on humans and their well-being (...)”

The waste of someone can be the raw material of another, and the Section 16 provides for the Minister, by way of regulations, prescribe the criteria for determining the point at which specified materials and products shall cease to be waste and shall be considered as a product or secondary raw material.

Mr Speaker, Sir, every process, every plan, every strategy and even the policies need to be revisited and updated as the conditions require. This Bill at the Section 16 (1) (b) states that the National Solid Waste Management Strategy shall be reviewed every 10 years and the action plan shall be reviewed every five years or at such other time as the Minister may determine and it will be in line with international conventions.

Even if we are an island, Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not operate in isolation; we work together with the international conventions and this Bill a vivid example of it. This Bill is talking of alignment with the circular economy approach which orients to nature as its role model. In

essence, the concept of the circular economy aims to keep raw materials in a closed loop. In this way, resources are maximally used, the need for new ones is reduced, waste is avoided and the life cycle of products is increased. In short, the waste of today becomes the raw material of tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill is a laudable one. I can go on more lengthily, but unfortunately, we have to respect the time allocation. Therefore, I would like to conclude by a quote of Bea Johnson –

“Refuse what you do not need; reduce what you do need; reuse what you consume; recycle what you cannot refuse, reduce, or reuse, and rot the rest.”

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I welcome this Bill and recommend it on the name of our future generation. Long live Mauritius! Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Léopold!

(7.00 p.m.)

**Mr J. B. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, in a time where we are becoming increasingly ecologically conscious and knowing the impact of the dangerous effects of waste on the environment and human health and, as a matter of fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are obliged to become smarter with regard to a sustainable ecological approach in the management of waste.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the success of the economic development of a country nowadays can be measured by how a country manages its waste. We can no longer hide our wastes in landfills. Being a tourist destination country, people from abroad will judge us by the way we dispose our wastes. Therefore, to be in pace with the development needs of our country, it is high time that we put all the activities and action required together to manage waste from its generation to its final disposal. This includes monitoring of everything, from its manufacture, from its collection, transport, treatment and its disposal, and in addition to that, changes in policy by legal and regulatory framework.

With the rapid economic growth and our change in the consumption pattern, the use of more and more single use disposable packaging with its high production. With such trend, Mr Speaker, Sir, the waste management systems are more and more lacking effectiveness.

We are smarter and more conscious nowadays. We know the consequences of excessive usage of single use plastic bags and where micro plastics end. In fact, it never ends: non-degradable, toxic entering food chains and drinking water harming both animals and human health. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the first step of waste management is to stop littering. We need further action to stop littering.

I welcome the introduction of this Bill tonight because it is an indication that Government by past approach is switching altogether towards strong commitment to the sustainable management of waste and resources with the goals of increasing the life cycle of materials to reduce the volume of waste at a given time, facilitating the reuse of materials and waste.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to repeat what has already been said by the hon. Minister from linear to circular economy. He has spoken lengthily about the sustainability of circular economy, waste to profit, all that is built is reminding us, Mr Speaker, Sir, that enough is enough. Throw-away economies are something of the past. Disposable society is simply not sustainable. We need to change the way we run our economy.

With the expansion and the emergence of our economy and the increase in world population, the trends in pattern of prices of raw material are increasing; global food prices keep on increasing. Unless we rethink the way we run our economy, the cost of living will continue to rise. This Bill is bringing good news in regard to what I have just mentioned as it is bringing support to stimulate our economy, creating jobs, values, natural capital and resilience to the rising prices of global resources.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the last ten years in Rodrigues, we have taken courageous actions to reduce and ban the use of plastic bags in view of making Rodrigues an ecological island.

This Bill will help in achieving the objectives of the Rodriguan people in establishing a sustainable approach in the preservation of our fragile ecosystem. It is a national strategy for the Republic of Mauritius. Therefore, this legal framework will further help standardise our approach on recycling, separation of food waste among so many innovative incentives.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to move carefully to such transition that this Bill is bringing. To make it work, we have to make due consideration through education and research to prepare consumers in terms of disruption and inconvenience.



This law must also make sure that the correct technologies apply for the recycle of waste and proper infrastructure for the management of waste. We need all stakeholders on board to work in collaboration to make these important changes. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to thank the hon. Minister of Environment, hon. Ramano, for taking such a huge step in enabling the conversion of wastes to raw materials. This is what I wanted to contribute to this debate, Mr Speaker, Sir, to add my voice.

I thank you for your attention.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. David!

(7.08 p.m.)

**Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Merci, M. le président. Face à ce projet de loi, qui est à la fois technique, économique, idéologique et politique, je vais tenter d'être pratique et pragmatique en laissant l'honorable Nuckcheddy sur la lune dans sa BMW, et je lui demande d'en profiter autant qu'il en est encore capable !

Aussi, je commencerais par aborder dans un premier temps certaines généralités et technicités du projet de loi, et dans un deuxième temps, j'interviendrai sur quelques modalités de mise en application.

M. le président, nous débattons, aujourd'hui, d'un nouveau modèle qui vise à réformer nos modes de production et nos habitudes de consommation. En résumé, ce projet de loi vise à transformer notre économie linéaire : produire, consommer, enterrer en une économie circulaire basée sur soit la valorisation de la matière, c'est l'approche du *waste to material*, soit la valorisation de l'énergie issue de la matière, c'est le concept du *waste to energy*.

Je dois dire que depuis que je siége au sein de notre Parlement - cela fait désormais plus de trois ans - j'ai très régulièrement entendu le ministre de l'Environnement prononcer ces deux mots : économie circulaire. D'où mon interpellation aujourd'hui, et ce sera là, ma première généralité sur ce projet de loi, à savoir, son nom. Je m'attendais, naturellement, à ce que le ministre de l'Environnement l'intitule : '*The Circular Economy Bill*,' qui aurait donné, à mon sens, plus de poids à la vision qu'il dit défendre et plus de consistance à ce nouveau modèle de développement économique transversal à tous les ministères.

Je tiens à préciser que cela a été fait dans d'autres pays –

- La France détient sa loi anti-gaspillage pour une économie circulaire ;
- L'Irlande a fait voter le *Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022*, et
- L'Écosse a lancé les consultations pour son *Circular Economy Bill*.

L'intégration et l'utilisation du terme économie dans son sens systémique ne devraient pas être réservées au seul ministère des Finances.

Mon deuxième point général renvoie au calendrier de ce projet de loi qui intervient relativement tard au vu des différentes études et consultations faites dans le passé, y compris par ce même gouvernement sous son format de *L'Alliance Lepep*. En effet, le ministre Ramano avait lui-même précisé dans sa réponse à la *PNQ* du 7 juillet 2020 au Leader de l'opposition d'alors, l'honorable Dr. Boolell, qui va cruellement manquer à ce débat ce soir, qu'il y avait eu déjà plusieurs étapes franchies, notamment un *consultancy study for the development of a new Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for Mauritius with focus on Resource Recovery and Recycling* lancé en mars 2017 pour lesquels les consultants avaient soumis leur rapport en décembre 2017. A ma connaissance, ce rapport n'a jamais été rendu public. Et je profite de mon intervention ce soir pour demander au ministre de bien vouloir déposer ce rapport à la Chambre.

Puis deux ans après dans un rapport technique, soumis en décembre 2019, par le *Technical Committee* avec des, je cite –

*“proposed concrete recommendations on the way forward.”*

Mars 2017, avril 2023, cela fait quand même six ans. Alors, je veux bien comprendre qu'en 2017, l'honorable Ramano était assis de ce côté de la Chambre, et que c'était sous l'impulsion du ministre de l'Environnement de l'époque, l'honorable Sinatambou, que les études pour la *Solid Waste Management Strategy* avaient été lancées.

Mais le ministre de l'Environnement, l'actuel, aurait quand même pu consolider l'existant pour venir avec ce projet de loi bien plus tôt au lieu de nous laisser avec cette impression qu'à force de parler d'économie circulaire, ce gouvernement ait fini par tourner en rond.

Après ces deux généralités, M. le président, j'aimerais aborder une technicité institutionnelle du projet de loi qui me paraît fondamentale par rapport à la réalité de notre

contexte local. Il s'agit de l'article 4 du projet de loi qui prévoit la création d'un *Department of Waste Management and Resource Recovery*. Je dois dire qu'en écoutant le discours du ministre un peu plus tôt, j'ai été surpris que le ministre de l'Environnement n'ait pas dit un seul mot sur la *Solid Waste Management Division* et de ce qu'elle va devenir par rapport à la création de ce nouveau département qui aura un rôle majeur à jouer dans la transition vers un système de gestion durable des déchets et de récupération des ressources.

Une quinzaine de fonctions sont listées pour ce nouveau département, mais je tiens humblement à attirer l'attention du ministre de l'Environnement qu'une fonction majeure est manquante dans la liste des fonctions de ce nouveau département, à savoir - et je propose - *the Department shall plan, implement, supervise and maintain solid waste management facilities*.

Car nous devons le rappeler que jusqu'à présent, c'est précisément la *Solid Waste Management Division* qui a entrepris la construction, l'exploitation et l'entretien d'importantes installations et infrastructures de gestion de nos déchets, à savoir le centre d'enfouissement technique de Mare Chicose, 5 stations de transfert à travers l'île, une installation de stockage intermédiaire des déchets dangereux à La Chaumière, et plus récemment 3 déchetteries à La Chaumière, La Laura et Poudre d'Or. Et le ministre a, lui-même, annoncé dans la *PNQ* du 7 juillet 2020 que le gouvernement a pour projet de construire 10 déchetteries ; une déchetterie dans chacune des cinq stations de transfert, plus 5 déchetteries additionnelles à proximité des régions habitées. Certes, trois ans après cette annonce, la note obtenue n'est que de 3 sur 10, mais en projet, ce sont 7 autres *civic amenity centres* qui devraient voir le jour tôt ou tard.

De plus, je relève qu'à la *PQ B/515* soulevée par l'honorable Lobine, il y a un an, en avril 2022, le ministre de l'Environnement avait révélé qu'un montant de R 290 millions avaient été alloués pour l'extension verticale du centre de Mare Chicose sur une période de dix ans. Au-delà de ces annonces, et le ministre l'a rappelé dans son discours, actuellement, il y a un appel d'offres lancé en novembre 2022 for *the development of two regional integrated waste processing facilities in Mauritius*, projet qui va coïncider avec l'entrée en vigueur du présent projet de loi, car le ministre a précisé que les soumissions à cet appel d'offres sont dans deux jours. Ce que je cherche à démontrer, M. le président, c'est qu'à travers ces différents projets de réalisation, l'État mauricien a été et restera la plus grande entité du pays responsable de la

planification, du développement, de l'exploitation, de l'entretien et de la gestion des installations de gestion des déchets.

Et ce sera certainement ce nouveau département du *Waste Management and Resource Recovery* qui sera le bras opérationnel du gouvernement d'aujourd'hui et de demain sur ces questions, d'où la nécessité me semble-t-il de rajouter explicitement cette fonction noir sur blanc dans le projet de loi et s'il me fallait encore vous convaincre, M. le ministre, je vous renverrais à un autre article 4, celui de la *Waste Water Management Authority Act* de 2000 qui stipule comme première fonction de l'autorité que et je cite –

*“The objects of the Authority shall be to –*

*(a) be responsible for the, wastewater sector in Mauritius and to carry out, monitor, supervise, maintain, manage and control wastewater works.”*

Et je ne peux m'empêcher, M. le président, de rajouter un commentaire sur l'article 5 du Bill, le présent Bill, à savoir celui qui concerne le directeur de ce département de *Waste Management and Resource Recovery*. Quand je constate que le directeur d'un autre département, celui du *Climate Change*, crée dans le *Climate Change Act* de novembre 2020, n'a toujours pas été nommé car sur le site internet du ministère de l'Environnement, Madame S. M. y est mentionnée comme *Acting Director of Climate Change* plus de deux ans après, j'ose espérer que dans le présent projet de loi, nous ne sommes pas en train de créer une nouvelle fonction pour laquelle il n'y aura pas de nomination.

M. le président, en ce qu'il s'agit des modalités de mise en pratique des activités de collecte, de tri et de valorisation des déchets, de la traduction concrète du principe de pollueur-payeur et de la mise en application de la REP, la responsabilité élargie des producteurs, il nous faudra surveiller chaque vendredi soir, le compte rendu des *Cabinet Decisions* pour connaître les différents *regulations* que le ministre aura fait approuver par le Conseil des ministres.

Toutefois, je souhaiterais aborder certains aspects pragmatiques de la circularisation de notre économie. Il va sans dire, M. le président, que le meilleur déchet, c'est celui qu'on ne crée pas mais voilà, on a une réalité ici à Maurice, chaque jour nous créons, nous générons 1,400 tonnes de déchets ; ce qui représente environ 510,000 tonnes à l'année et ce qui nous coûte aujourd'hui environ R 1 milliard pour la collecte auxquelles s'ajoutent R 800 millions pour le

traitement, soit un total de R 1,8 milliard par an pour la collecte et le traitement des déchets. C'est le chiffre qui a été donné par le ministre un peu plus tôt et évidemment, ce qui nous fait un coût actuel de la gestion des déchets d'environ R 3,500 la tonne et évidemment la mise en œuvre d'une nouvelle gestion durable, encadrée et marquée par l'utilisation de nouvelles installations et de nouvelles technologies va impacter ce coût à la tonne.

Mais dans un même temps, ce nouveau modèle va engendrer un nouveau développement économique, favoriser l'éco-conception des produits, créer des emplois verts et générer une énergie renouvelable dans le cadre de projet *Waste to Energy*, tout en diminuant le gaspillage des ressources et l'impact environnemental des déchets. Mais pour rester pragmatique, à la base de cette économie circulaire, il y a un coût à payer et la question est précisément de savoir qui va assumer ce coût ? Qui va collecter les contributions et comment répartit-on les fonds de façon intelligente et transparente afin de créer un système fiable, rentable et durable ?

M. le président, si je prends l'exemple des bouteilles *PET* car il s'agit probablement de l'un des secteurs les mieux structurés selon moi à ce jour, avant même l'introduction de ce projet de loi. En novembre 2010, sous le leadership du Premier ministre de l'époque, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, le ministre des Finances de l'époque, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, avait dans une logique environnementale, doublé le *excise duty* sur les bouteilles *PET* en faisant passer de R 1 à R 2 par bouteille et aujourd'hui, 13 ans après, cette écotaxe existe toujours et vise à financer le recyclage des bouteilles plastiques en versant une subvention de R 15 par kilo de plastique recyclé et si je me base sur les chiffres communiqués par le ministre Ramano lors de la désormais fameuse *PNQ* de juillet 2020, il y a environ 125 millions de bouteilles *PET* qui sont mises sur le marché mauricien annuellement, représentant environ 2,500 tonnes par an de plastique dont seulement 40% sont collectés pour le recyclage soit environ 1,000 tonnes de plastique *PET* recyclés par an. M. le président, quand je fais le calcul, basé sur les chiffres du ministre, cela fait donc 125 millions de bouteilles *PET* que je multiplie par R 2 la bouteille, ce qui m'amène à un chiffre de R 250 millions collectés par an par la *MRA*, alors que l'État ne reverse que 1000 tonnes, multipliées par R 15 le kilo, c'est-à-dire R 15,000 la tonne, ce qui nous fait donc une subvention de R 15 millions reversés chaque année aux recycleurs de plastique *PET*. L'État collecte donc d'un côté R 250 millions d'écocontribution et reverse R 15 millions seulement d'éco-subvention aux recycleurs de plastique et je me suis posé tout bêtement la

question mais que devient le différentiel de R 235 millions restants, chaque année dans le *Consolidated Fund*. Cet argent sert-il réellement au recyclage des déchets plastiques?

Avec une organisation quelque peu différente en ce qu'il s'agit des pneus, mais là aussi avec des chiffres qui font réfléchir, l'État perçoit un *Environment Protection Fee* de R 50 pour chaque pneu neuf importé à Maurice, soit environ R 60 millions par an sur la base de 1,2 millions de pneus importés par an, ça fait un pneu par habitant et en ce qu'il s'agit de la valorisation des pneus usagés, il existe deux filières. Et là, je dois dire que je suis assez fier d'avoir pu visiter deux usines de retraitement des pneus usagés, les deux se trouvant dans ma circonscription - alors ce ne sont pas les seuls, j'en ai pu identifier deux, qui font deux métiers différents, une première entreprise qui est basée à Pailles qui procède au rechapage des pneus de poids lourds et une deuxième entreprise basée à La Tour Koenig qui elle, procède au broyage et au recyclage du caoutchouc, ce n'est pas de cuivre, qui provient des pneus usés pour en faire des *pellets* ou de la poudre recyclée, destinée à l'export vers l'Inde ou vers l'Europe pour fabriquer des pneus neufs ou pour être incorporé dans les revêtements de voirie. Et là aussi, basée sur la subvention de l'État, lors l'État a mis en place deux types de subventions quand il s'agit de pneus, d'un côté pour les pneus réchappés, c'est R 25 par pneu réchappé et quand vous broyez le caoutchouc du pneu pour en faire de la poudre ou des *pellets*, c'est R 2 par kilo de matière caoutchouc recyclée et quand j'additionne avec les chiffres de pneus réchappés et de caoutchouc recyclé, j'arrive à R 30 millions subventionnées alors que l'État a collecté R 60 millions de taxes. Que deviennent les R 30 millions non-utilisées dans les caisses de l'État ? Et j'ai refait le calcul comme ça pour différentes filières, par exemple, pour les téléphones portables. Alors je sais que tout le monde a au moins un téléphone portable dans cette Chambre. Je ne sais pas combien d'entre vous savez que sur chaque téléphone neuf importé à Maurice, il y a un *Environment Protection Fee* de R 70 par téléphone importé. Alors qu'il n'existe à ce jour aucun mécanisme organisé et subventionné pour le recyclage de ces téléphones et de ce qu'on appelle le DEEE- les déchets d'équipements électriques et électroniques ; ordinateurs, télévisions, réfrigérateur, lave-linge qui représentent environ 9,000 tonnes par an et pour lesquels le *Advance Recycling Fee* annoncé dans le budget 2016-2017 n'a jamais été mis en place.

Au final, M. le président, pour organiser, structurer et financer les filières de recyclage des différents produits recyclables, que ce soient les plastiques, les pneus, des DEEE ou encore le papier, le carton ou le ver, il nous faudra fort probablement faire appel au dispositif de la

responsabilité élargie du producteur, dont le principe est assez simple à comprendre, celui qui fabrique un produit, celui qui distribue un produit ou celui qui importe un produit, doit prendre en charge la fin de vie de ce produit. Nous parlons ici bien du concept de pollueur-payeur car plus un produit est polluant, plus les coûts pour gérer sa fin de vie seront importants pour le producteur.

Alors à la nuance près, et cela est une réalité locale dans notre pays, c'est qu'à Maurice, nous comptons très peu de fabricants, de producteurs, mais beaucoup plus d'importateurs et de distributeurs. Donc, à Maurice, selon ce nouveau modèle, ces importateurs et distributeurs pourront être appelés à mettre en pratique des structures collectives à but non-lucratif, appelé éco organismes, qui devront être agréés au moins par les ministères de l'Environnement et des Finance sur la base d'un cahier des charges d'agrément spécifique à la filière qui les concerne. Cet agrément pourrait être revu sur une base périodique, par exemple, tous les cinq ans.

Ainsi, pour chaque produit mis sur le marché, l'importateur ou le distributeur versera une éco-contribution à l'éco-organisme, auquel il adhère, et son montant sera directement lié au type de produits mis sur le marché et au coût de la gestion des déchets en fin de vie. Les éco-contributions permettront ainsi de financer l'ensemble des obligations des producteurs : prévention, réutilisation, collecte, tri, recyclage, valorisation matière, valorisation énergétique et évidemment la sensibilisation du public. Là, où il s'agira clairement d'un changement drastique pour tous, y compris pour l'État, qui dans ce modèle, devra s'habituer à ne plus percevoir les éco-contributions et à ne pas en fixer les montants.

M. le président, je veux terminer en disant un mot rapide sur les déchets organiques qui représentent environ 60 % de nos déchets, autrement dit, sur les 510,000 tonnes de déchets enfouis chaque année à Mare Chicose. Ce sont 306,000 tonnes de déchets organiques compostables qui ne sont pas exploités immédiatement, mais qui pour autant vont grossir le gisement enfoui, qui sur le moyen et selon le long terme, alimentera la centrale locale du *Landfill Gas To Energy*, qui transforme le biogaz en électricité.

Ainsi, dans le contexte de l'appel d'offres qui est en cours et des prochains appels d'offres à venir, pour la mise en place des centres de tri et de compostage des déchets organiques, il faudra que l'État soutienne la filière du compost local, non seulement à travers le paiement d'un *tipping fee* par tonne de matière, mais aussi en s'engageant via le ministère du Commerce sur un

volume de compost *Made in Maurice* qui sera obligatoirement écoulé sur le marché mauricien afin d'éviter de reproduire certaines erreurs fatales du passé pour la filière du compostage, comme celle qu'on peut encore voir à la Chaumière.

M. le président, je termine ici. Il y a 12 jours, c'était le 30 mars, le secrétaire de l'ONU, Monsieur António Guterres, citait la ville de Kigali, la capitale du Rwanda comme l'une des villes leader au monde du *waste management* aux côtés du Japon et de la Slovénie, à suivre en exemple pour avoir atteint un taux de valorisation de 50 à 80 % de ces déchets. Vivement donc le jour où les Nations Unies pourront en dire de même pour la république de Maurice.

J'en ai terminé, M. le président.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dhunnoo!

(7.31 p.m.)

**Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. First and foremost, I seize the opportunity to congratulate the hon. Minister, Mr Kavydass Ramano, and his dedicated team who have worked on the Waste Management and Resource Bill before this House. This Bill bears testimony that the Government and particularly the hon. Prime Minister are committed to set out a road map geared towards waste management and in the best interest of the citizens of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was really important to bring this Bill to the House when we see what is happening in the world and in Mauritius also when it comes to waste management. If we take the example –

- in England, there are about 1,177 million tonnes of waste that are thrown every year;
- in Australia, 67 million tonnes. There has been the National Waste Report prepared by the Commonwealth Department, where it was revealed that Australia generates more waste than the western economy at an estimated of 67 million tonnes of wastes in 2016-2017, equivalent to 2.7 tonnes per capita. It is also recycling less than average, and



- in Mauritius, we had the latest figures that have been mentioned by other hon. Members, whether it was from the Opposition and the Minister even said it.

We have a linear model where waste manageable has, so far, focused on land filling of collected municipal wastes at Mare Chicose and recycling sector is still at its infancy stage. I think hon. David will agree with me and I think he agree with the Bill also. When we listened to his speech, he was very much focused on what we need to do, and this is what the Government is doing. We are going in that direction when we talk about circular economy, the loop economy, on waste management specifically, like you said yourself, the best way is not to generate waste, but we know that there is an education to be done.

I was talking earlier to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, where she was saying that, in fact, we have a big education to do for this paradigm shift. We need to do it even at school. Like hon. Nuckcheddy has said, we are bringing this Bill for the future of this country. We know that what is the devastating effect of climate change on our country and being a Small Island Developing State, we see how important this Bill is.

We have seen what has happened in Mare Chicose with regard to the methane and with regard to the team from the Fire Rescue Services, who have been trying to stop the fire that initiated there for weeks, and which has affected many people in the region. We can say that there has to be a rethinking which we need to adopt. The term 'circular economy,' hon. David, does not come from hon. Kavydass Ramano or this Government. The United Nations has in the past, and even the European Parliament, have come with this concept. It is not a new concept; we are not bringing a new word from a dictionary. But we need to focus on what we have to do for the future of this country.

We would like to be cited by Mr Guterres that Mauritius, like Kigali, is among the cleanest island. Why not? We would like to be like this! But we have to start somewhere, and this is where we are starting from. We are going to go with the waste to energy and this is another concept that we have to vote. You mentioned about France, do you know that France has come up with a green bond with regards to industry? Because they are the polluters, they are the ones that have to pay. And they are contributing, they started with, if I am not mistaken, 700 m. euros, now it is above billion euros. We can say they are contributing in the economy and this is how they are financing.

In Australia, for example, another concept that they are putting is Recycling Modernisation Fund and they are also bringing other funds that is important to support some industries but also to make the industries and companies realise that it is important to save the planet. That is why, it is important that this Bill is before this House today. We have to start somewhere and I think my honourable colleague is in the right direction and with the support of the expert from the University of Mauritius, they have been developing a plan. We have to start somewhere and we are going in the right direction.

We are also in line with our Government Programme like has been mentioned by hon. Ramano wherein we stated that by 2030, our goal is to develop an ecological transition and reduce it by 70% and the volume of waste disposed in the landfill, to be in line with SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production.

But there is a big education to be done. In fact, we should take the example of hon. Dr. Jagutpal when we are talking about cars. He is the one who is using electric car. I don't know how many of us are using electric cars but he is the one contributing to save the planet and for Mauritius to contribute towards it. We can also say that there is much to be done.

Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea mentioned that this industry should not be making money but I see it, Mr Speaker, Sir, as an opportunity. This waste resource management can be a pillar of the economy. Hon. David was just mentioning about mobile; everyone has a minimum of - I don't think one - but two mobiles in this House.

Recycling of the e-waste. E-waste is a big industry. Nowadays we can see how much China is doing about it; how China has been importing waste. We are thinking about disposing waste while they are importing waste and how they have been developing the electronics.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the increasing volume and complexity of waste associated with modern economy is posing a serious risk to the ecosystem and human health. It has been mentioned by hon. Nuckcheddy and also by hon. Léopold earlier. For example, every year we have an estimated 11.2 billion tons of solid waste which is collected worldwide and the decay of organic proportion of solid waste is contributing about 5% of global greenhouse gas emission. And of all waste streams, wastes from electronic equipment containing new and complex hazardous substances present the fastest growing challenge in both developed and developing countries. This is because the poor waste management ranging from non-existing collection systems to

ineffective disposal which causes, like we have said earlier, air pollution, water and soil contamination.

Landfill is no longer the solution. So, we had to come with this Bill and come with proper decision so that tomorrow waste-to-energy is a reality, green bond is a reality in this country like it is being done in France. We also have the electronic waste as a part of the economy which is an industry can create more jobs, green jobs like we have said earlier, for many people here.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the solution for minimisation of waste is difficult to achieve right now if we do not have a proper education and proper, like we have said, action plan and I have seen that in the Bill. The Minister is coming with a proper action plan and they will need to work on it. And I think we will need to have many actors even in the private sector like we have always been doing in Mauritius; consultation and work together with most of the actors, because it doesn't concern only the Government. We need to have the Opposition; we need to also have the companies that can be described as polluters, recycling companies. Now, with the incentives that the Government is giving even in the industry sector, I can say to hon. David that you will soon see that there will be new companies that will be coming.

I am a profession who has been working in the agricultural sector before working on the African continent in the Financial Services Sector, I can tell you that there are so many companies – two or three companies – that want to come to Mauritius to do recycling of *la roue*, of tyres and there are big companies that are doing it in South Africa. They have a good track record and they are coming here to do it. I will also tell you that there are many things for which the Government is giving incentives so that we can attract more investors that create more jobs. We agree that there are many things that we don't know about waste-to-energy. This is something that we have to learn.

The hon. Minister has said that a feasibility study has been done and there are other feasibility studies that are in line for the future so that we go in this direction because this is the future. If you want to save our country and our planet, this is where we have to go. I would say that if we take the example, Mr Speaker, Sir, where waste cannot be avoided, the recovery of materials and energy from waste as well as remanufacturing and recycling waste into usable product should be the second option.

Recycling leads to substantial resource saving. For example, if for every ton of paper recycled, 70 trees and 50% of water can be saved. Just to tell you that this Government, through our hon. Minister is bringing this Bill to the House so that we have a road map to go towards this green energy and also to fight climate change and also to make another pillar of the economy because in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have only human resources; we don't have oil. We are not like other countries that have gold. We have our sun, sea and beaches. Now we have our Mauritius International Financial Sector which has been attracting many investors to come here and create jobs for our youth.

This industry of waste and resource management could be one future for our children and Mr Speaker, Sir, I welcome this Bill to the House. I thank the hon. Minister for bringing it here and I fully support it. I thank you for your attention.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ramkaun!

(7.45 p.m.)

**Mr S. Ramkaun (Second Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet):** Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the consequences of the global urbanisation is increasing volume of solid waste. According to estimates made by Beede and Bloom in 1995, about 1.3 billion metric tons of municipal solid waste was generated globally in 1990. At present, the yearly generation of solid waste equals to 1.6 billion metric tons approximately. A considerable amount of money went into managing such huge volumes of solid wastes. Asian countries alone spent about 25 billion USD on solid waste management per year in the early 1990's. This figure is expected to rise to 50 billion USD by 2025 according to Hoornweg and Thomas.

These figures suggest that Solid Waste Management has become a large, complex and costly service. Solid Waste Management can be defined as a discipline, associated with the control of generation, storage, collection, transfer, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste. Sustainable Solid Waste Management in a way, is governed by the best principles of public health, economics, engineering, aesthetics and other environmental considerations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government of Mauritius spends around 1.5 billion annually on waste management including waste collection, operation and maintenance of transfer station, transportation of waste to landfill and operation and maintenance of landfill site. The local

authorities altogether spend 990 million annually on waste collection services. Mauritius with a total population of 1.3 million generates about – as already said by the hon. Minister – 1488 tons of wastes daily. In 2018, the total volume of wastes disposed at Mare Chicose landfill was 543,196 tons which is the sole landfill on the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as compared to solid wastes where an average of 540,000 tons are generated annually and disposed of at Mare Chicose landfill, it is estimated that an average of 17,000 tons of hazardous wastes are generally generated annually out of which 10% comprising laboratory and industrial chemical waste, paint waste, obsolete pesticides, pharmaceutical waste, gas cylinders, waste aerosols and these cannot be disposed of locally. Due to the increase in solid waste generation, an average of 3.1% per annum over the past 10 years, the lifetime of Mare Chicose has decreased significantly and will reach saturation by the current design soon. In view of the impending saturation of Mare Chicose sanitary landfill and no other short form measures available, Government has already embarked on the vertical expansion of the landfill site.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of any waste treatment disposal facility generally takes 3-5 years to materialise. Whatever future waste treatment or disposal facilities implemented, there will always be some residual waste and rejects emanating from these plants during the operation as well as maintenance of these facilities. These need to be ultimately disposed in a landfill. Attempts to find land for a new landfill with a view of creating disposal capacity for the coming years have not yielded the expected results. If the implementation of any expansion of Mare Chicose landfill started indicatively, the additional lifespan is expected to be at least ten years. Once the Mare Chicose landfill is saturated after the expansion, there will still be a need for a landfill. New land of an extent of 30-40 hectares will have to be sought for development of a new landfill. Lateral expansion of the landfill will be envisaged but this entails surveys, relevant Ministries and negotiations with land owners.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the increasing solid waste generation is becoming a major problem in Mauritius with the sole landfill of the island nearing saturation while the Mare Chicose landfill has been ensuring a safe and environmentally sound management of solid wastes since 1997. This is not a sustainable approach now. In this context, the Solid Waste Management Division with the financial assistance of *Agence Française de Développement* developed a new Solid Waste Management strategy and action plan focusing on resource recovery and recycling.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Strategy Action Plan requires a regulatory framework to ensure the environmentally safe and sound management of solid waste and hazardous waste and includes a sustainable Waste Management System so the adoption of a circular economy approach focusing on waste reduction, reuse, treatment, safe disposal, material recovery and recycling. The Strategy Action Plan defines five key areas that represent the corner stones of the new Solid Waste Management Strategy for Mauritius as follows –

- (i) Prevention and environmentally responsible consumption;
- (ii) The increase in resource recovery;
- (iii) Adequate technology for energy recovery;
- (iv) Provision of adequate disposal infrastructure, and
- (v) Information, education and communication.

The Ministry is embarking on the setting up and operation of regional composting plants and sorting units on public-private partnership (PPP) basis. Prior to the operation of the regional composting plants and sorting units, waste segregation at source will have to become a reality in Mauritius. In that regard, bins will be provided to each household for source segregation of the waste into three fractions, namely, wet wastes, organic wastes, dry wastes which is recyclable materials and residual wastes.

Composting plants will accept source segregated organic waste such as food and yard wastes while the sorting units will accept recyclable materials such as paper, plastics, glass and metals for further sorting prior to selling to recyclers. It is expected that the first composting plant and sorting unit will be operational by next year in the northern and western regions of Mauritius.

Notwithstanding the coming into operation of regional composting plants and sorting units, the Solid Waste Management Division has already initiated several projects in line with resource, recovery and recycling as well as the setting up of a Civic Amenity Centre within La Chaumière, La Laura, Poudre d'Or and Roche Bois transfer stations to allow the public to dispose their waste items such as paper, plastics, metals, construction and demolition wastes, waste oil, e-waste and used tyres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with all these projects to be implemented in the short to medium term, it is expected that the recycling industry in Mauritius will significantly develop a line with a circular economy and thus help Mauritius achieve target 12.5 of the United Nations sustainable development goal on responsible consumption and production, that is, by 2030 substantially reduce waste, generations to prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

This Bill accordingly *inter alia* provides for a department of waste management and resource recovery which shall *inter alia* develop natural strategies and actions plans for solid waste and hazardous wastes, implement measures related to the sustainable and integrated management of waste, regulate the waste management sector, monitor the collection, treatment and disposal of waste.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for Mauritius, another very suitable or even the best way is to ensure sustainable Solid Waste Management through waste incineration with energy recovery and with a view to diverting maximum disposal of wastes from landfilling. However, this does not fall under the ambit of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change but through the Renewal Energy Road Map 2030 of the electric sector of the Government of Mauritius, through the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, has committed not only to have its GHG emissions by 40% by 2030 but more importantly to pursue its green energy transition and develop a more resilient national electric sector that is grounded on a richer mix of renewable energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these initiatives are expected to trigger economic growth, job creation and overall improvement in social welfare. Clear objectives of the energy sector has been set up by Government, some of which have been announced in the Budget of 2021, namely –

- the establishment of the Green Energy Industry as an economic pillar of activity;
- an accelerated increase in the share of renewable energy in the electricity mix to 60% by 2030;
- phasing out of the use of coal in electricity generation by 2030, and
- an increase of 10% energy efficiency by 2030.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would here congratulate the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, hon. Kavy Ramano, for this important Bill to be brought to

this House to ensure to achieve target 12.5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on responsible consumption and production.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer to the statement made by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2017, which reads as follows, and I quote –

“(…) It is our conviction that we have no right to snatch from our future generations, their right to have a clean and beautiful earth. It is part of our thinking and for that reason we do not believe in exploitation of nature.

We people do not have the right to take more than necessary from nature.”

With this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I end my proposal and discussion in the debate. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Lobine!

(7.58 p.m.)

**Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is an old saying that rings so true today: waste not, want not. Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, global leaders, local communities and our country alike increasingly call for a fix for the so-called throwaway culture. But beyond individuals and households, waste also represents a broader challenge that affects human health and livelihoods, the environment and prosperity.

Solid waste management is a universal issue that matters to every single person in the world, Mr Speaker, Sir. The United Nations General Assembly, on 14 December 2022, formally recognised the importance of the zero waste initiatives and proclaimed the 30<sup>th</sup> of March as the International Day of Zero Waste. Same was observed for the first time this year.

One of the main concerns of our planet Earth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is plastic pollution. Many efforts are being put by various governments around the world, even in Mauritius, with the introduction of new regulations and legislations with regard to single-use plastics. Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing global environmental issues, Mr Speaker, Sir. The world produces 400 million tonnes of plastics annually, 25 times more than 60 years ago. Only 9% is recycled, 12% is incinerated and 79% is landfilled or ends in nature.



This shows the colossal task that we have here in Mauritius, even being a small country, of dealing with waste and, most importantly, plastic waste because it is embedded in our culture. We use plastics every day for several years now, Mr Speaker, Sir. In Mauritius, an average of 500 kg of plastic waste is produced per inhabitant annually. Every year, 70,000 tonnes of plastic wastes are disposed in the landfill of Mare Chicose, 3,000 tonnes only are recycled and an undefined amount ends up in the environment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past 10 years, solid waste generation in Mauritius has been increasing at a rate of 2% per annum, mainly due to an increase in economic growth and associated changes in consumption. In 2021, Mr Speaker, Sir, for instance, over 500,000 tonnes of solid waste were disposed at Mare Chicose Landfill, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Minister in his speech, which has managed more than 9 million tonnes of solid waste since it started operating in 1997.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, as waste generation increases, so does the importance of setting up an effective solid waste management system. To avoid issues such as pollution, related health risks, resource depletion and wastage, the focus on waste prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling, as opposed to using the landfill, is in my humble opinion the way forward. A legal framework for the sound management of waste is therefore fundamental to creating the appropriate conditions for the effective management of all waste streams.

The solid waste management legislative framework, therefore, aims to provide strategic direction and regulation for sustainable solid and hazardous waste management practices. This new framework will consolidate all the legal provisions pertaining to solid and hazardous wastes contained in various laws and enable the implementation of a circular economy in the waste sector.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am concerned about the applicability and the practicality of this Bill. The handling and disposal of municipal solid waste is a growing concern in Mauritius, which with the increased volume of solid waste generated and the saturation of the sole landfill facility of the island, Mare Chicose, numerous gaps do exist in the current solid waste management system of the country, and which is in my humble opinion, out-dated. I will join my hon. learned colleagues, hon. David and hon. Aadir Ameer Meea, and also the concerns of the hon. Minister and other speakers from the other side of the House, when they spoke about Mare

Chicose. Hon. David spoke about the technicality with regard to this landfill. I am talking about Mare Chicose - a catastrophe in waiting.

The hon. Minister mentioned the fire that broke out last October and it took months to be brought under control. We may not be lucky next time around, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mare Chicose, the only landfill site is completely saturated and wastes are being dumped in a haphazard manner. We cannot wait any longer. Why I say so, Mr Speaker, Sir? I will refer from what the National Audit Report had to say on Mare Chicose, and I am referring to page 238, section 13.2 of this report. This is what the report says about Mare Chicose: 'There are considerable delays in awarding a new works contract. A contract of 59 months awarded in January 2014 is still ongoing and has been extended by an additional 52 months up to now.'

Mr Speaker, Sir, as bidding documents are still being prepared, the extension period will exceed the initial contract period. If I can use an anecdote, this qualifies to be recorded also in the Guinness Book of Records. This is unprecedented, Mr Speaker, Sir. If you refer to what the Audit Report said, the bidding documents, which were still at the CPB, the best case scenario for a new contract to be awarded could be at the earliest possible October or November 2023. The main concern here, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the problem of void space to dispose of waste. This will persist and even if we award that contract, it will take at least 6 to 7 months after the award for those new spaces to be created.

This will persist and even if you want that contract, it will take at least six to seven months after the award for those new spaces to be created. And this is of serious concern, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we do not want to have a repetition of what happened in October and I share the concern of the hon. Minister on this matter; we are all very concerned about this issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a project with a localised site and on-going activities virtually unchanged since the year 2000, that is, some 23 years ago and the Ministry is now taking more than five years to award a contract. Maybe I shall request my hon. Colleague, Mr Reza Uteem, who is the Chairman of PAC that they should have a look at this issue raised by the Director of Audit, with regard to the landfill at Mare Chicose. They should go there for a *constat de visu*.

It is my humble opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a good well-planned biomethanation project will increase renewable energy production and is sustainable and this is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have got experience in that. The company that is doing that process at Mare

Chicose, has got that experience. They are going the extra miles but we have to match those demands. We have got new technologies with regard to methanation. In France, this is becoming something very interesting with regard to sustainability of this project.

So, I will invite the hon. Minister to have a holistic approach with regard to Mare Chicose at the earliest convenience. We cannot allow this to continue and we cannot wait for all those legislative frameworks to be put in place with the regulations or the promulgation of this law to act. We need to act now for Mare Chicose; there is an urgent issue for Mare Chicose.

With regard to the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to Clause 17 - Duties of local authorities relating to National Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan. The hon. Minister spoke about the local authorities with regard to their staffing, their equipment, and I completely share his views, that yes, they need proper staffing, they need proper equipment. But again, we need to look at the reality and the reality is what again the Director of Audit has said with regard to his comments on Local Authorities and I quote –

“The Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management awarded the contract for the supply of seven lorries mounted with crane for the sum of Rs 27.5 million in July 2019. The lorries were for the benefit of seven different local authorities (LAs) and delivery was scheduled for January 2020. They were received in June 2020 and were already registered in the name of the seven LAs. Four commissioning exercises had to be carried out due to non-compliance of proposed models with technical specifications. The report of the fourth commissioning exercise was not yet finalised in January 2023. Three and a half years after the award of the contract, delivery of the lorries as per specifications did not materialise.”

So, it is very nice to have a very well drafted piece of legislation but in practice, those people working in the Scavenging Unit, those soldiers who have to go day in, day out to collect those wastes. They do not have proper equipment; they are not well paid; they are not well equipped and they do not have lorries. I take the example of the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix. Right now, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have got eight lorries that cannot be used. So, just imagine the reality of things on the field.

So, I invite the hon. Minister that with this new piece of legislation, there should be a Memorandum of Understanding that should be entered with the Local Authorities because most

of the policy matters will be taken over by the Director as specified in this Bill, and I would invite the hon. Minister to also have a look at what we have with the *Police de l'environnement*. Again enforcement agencies, Mr Speaker, Sir. We want to tackle the problem of waste in this country. We have got les *éboueurs* but we have got people that should enforce the law. Go and have a look at the conditions of work of those in the *Police de l'environnement*! When they come in your locality when there is a complaint, you need to make a complaint against them because their vehicles are not properly equipped and are dirty and they do not have the required equipment to enforce the law. They do not have proper staffing. I know the hon. Minister can ask the Commissioner of Police, the *Police de l'environnement* to be assisted but if we need a proactive approach, if we need to be a sustainable island, we need a proper *Police de l'environnement*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In that same vein, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also invite the hon. Minister to give us more clarity with regard to Clause 23 - Collection of waste, at sub paragraph 2 whereby it is stated that

—

“A local authority may, for the purpose of subsection (1) and with the approval of the Minister, prescribe a fee for the collection and disposal of household waste, commercial waste and industrial waste.”

We need more clarity. Is it a disguised form of taxation to urban and rural inhabitants as my hon. colleague, Aadil Ameer Meea rightly pointed out? We need clarity on this issue and with regard to Clause 24 - Receptacles for household waste, again, how will distribution of same be done? Will each household be given free of charge for the first time those receptacles or will they have to pay for it as mentioned at sub paragraph 3 of this particular Clause in this Bill? So, we need clarity. I would invite the hon. Minister to clarify on this matter because the inhabitants of Mauritius be it in the rural or urban areas are asking questions. Right now, we are having difficulties. There are certain regions that are obtaining '*poubelles*' and in certain regions they do not have it. Now, we need three receptacles, how will this be done in practice? I would invite more clarity from the hon. Minister on this matter.

With regard to the end-of-life vehicles, I welcome the position of the hon. Minister on this issue and I appreciate that he has taken into account the technical assistance of Africa RISE on this issue and this is also of paramount importance, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are having so many

vehicles on our roads; it is increasing day by day. This is a vibrant industry, we are selling more cars and, of course, we are generating more wastes out of all those the used end-of-life cars. So, we need again a holistic approach; we need to talk to the relevant stakeholders in this particular matter because it should be done in a very technical manner.

I know at Réunion Island, there are process plants that could be of help to us and maybe the hon. Minister could go for a visit to see how it works because the amount of vehicles that they have in Réunion Island matches a little bit what we have here in Mauritius. Of course, it might also not be a very popular measure to put in place with regard to end-of-life vehicle because there are people that have a good vehicle which is 15-20 years old. So, all these should be looked at with a very holistic approach and I welcome this policy decision from the hon. Minister.

As a note of conclusion, Mr Speaker, Sir, I hope that bureaucracy and red tapism will not hinder the rapid *mise-en-place* of this legal framework being proposed. And here, I refer to the fate of the National Environment Cleaning Authority. After a year, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are still awaiting for the National Cleaning and Embellishment Strategy with an action plan to embellish Mauritius and keep Mauritius clean. In the meantime, our country, if we go by the state of uncleanliness of our motorways; we all witness this every day – we do not have lawns any more, we do not have beautiful flowers; we have grasses that are becoming shrubs and we wait for them to become one or two metres in height then we just cut them and this looks ugly. We do not have a proper plan for that.

So, I invite the hon. Minister and the Government to walk the talk. We want a clean Mauritius. I support the policy of the hon. Minister with regards to implementation of this Bill but we have got a real issue of red tapism and bureaucracy in Mauritius. You are the policymaker, you have got your committees in place, you need to have them monitored properly so that those policies are applied properly and in a timely manner.

And I also invite the hon. Minister to embark on an educational programme not just for the students but for the population at large because we have got a mentality, a culture of not to accept change with regards to cleanliness. We do have that culture of *mo balye devan mo laport mo zet kot mo vwazin*. So, we need this tough approach in terms of education and dissemination

of that information via this piece of legislation. And hon. Minister, walk the talk with regard to this Bill; you have our support to have a clean and sustainable Mauritius.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Collendavelloo!

**Mr Collendavelloo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr Toussaint seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

**Mr Toussaint seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

Adjournment matter! Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

### MATTERS RAISED

(8.19 p.m.)

#### POPE HENNESSY STREET, BEAU BASSIN –WATER ACCUMULATION – CLEANING OF DRAINS

**Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière):** Merci. Je m'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Infrastructures nationales par rapport à l'eau qui s'accumule abondamment en temps de pluie à la rue Pope Hennessy à Beau Bassin, à proximité d'un arrêt d'autobus, d'un Kovil et du restaurant couramment appelé restaurant Coco. Et le ministre des Finances lui-même est un témoin privilégié, si j'ose dire de cette situation, car il a grandi dans les environs. Et pas plus loin que la semaine dernière, mon collègue et moi-même,

nous avons parlé de ce problème au ministre des Finances. Et, il est vrai qu'un exercice de nettoyage de ces drains ont eu lieu mais malgré cela le problème reste entier. Alors, au nom des habitants de Mont Roche, je demande que ces drains puissent être revus et remodelés. Merci.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun):** I will refer the matter to my colleague.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

(8.20 p.m.)

#### **CHEMIN GRENIER, CHAMOUBY ROAD – TARRING REQUEST**

**Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River):** Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de l'Energie, l'honorable Joe Lesjongard. Ça fait un an que l'Avenue l'Impasse Madmax à Chamouny road, Chemin Grenier, a subi des fouilles dues aux travaux effectués par la CWA et depuis, cette route est restée dans cet état. Je demanderais humblement au ministre de faire le nécessaire afin de réasphalter cette route car les habitants de l'Avenue MadMax souffrent énormément en période de grosse pluie. Merci.

**The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr. G. Lesjongard):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken note. I will convey the message to the General Manager of the Central Water Authority. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ms Tour!

(8.21 p.m.)

#### **STE CROIX, L'ALLÉE PÈRE LAVAL – BUSTOP**

**Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):** Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable Alan Ganoo. Les responsables de la paroisse de Ste Croix souhaiteraient aménager un abribus sur *l'allée* Père Laval, non loin de l'église. Je demande donc au ministre de bien vouloir organiser une visite sur les lieux avec la *TMRSU* afin d'avoir leurs recommandations pour la réalisation de ce projet pour les habitants de Ste Croix et les alentours. Merci.

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr A. Ganoo):** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have

taken good note of the issue raised by the hon. Member. I will certainly look into the matter and liaise with the TMRSU, the hon. Member herself and her colleagues of the constituency. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dhunoo!

(8.22 p.m.)

#### **BUS ROUTES 104 & 121 – CAMP LEVIEUX – METRO STATION**

**Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request tonight is addressed to the hon. Alan Ganoo, minister of Transport and Light-Rail. It concerns the bus Route 104 La Croix Street and bus Route 121 Camp Levieux. Both of the buses were supposed to be on the new Metro Station because these urban buses bring people from different regions to the Metro Station and my colleague and myself, the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Obeegadoo, we have received complaints from members of the public from La Croix and Camp Levieux so that the buses are on the Metro station because it is very far for them to walk and during rainy days – as you know Curepipe is very rainy – this is causing much inconveniences to the inhabitants. I would request if you could talk to the NLTA to do the needful at your end.

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr A. Ganoo):** Certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will get in touch with the authorities and the NLTA and do the needful.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. David!

(8.23 p.m.)

#### **COLLINE DE BONNEFIN – CLOGGED DRAIN – WATER ACCUMULATION**

**Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Merci, M. le président. Ma requête de ce soir s'adressera au ministre des Infrastructures nationales et concerne le drain qui longe ce que l'on appelle à Pailles, La Colline de Bonnefin. C'est un drain qui se retrouve au fil des mois et des années obstrué par la terre, des roches et des débris qui sont lessivés systématiquement par l'eau de pluie. Et ce drain étant quasiment bouché, l'eau de pluie, au lieu d'être évacuée, ruisselle, inonde les maisons et les cours à Bonnefin, à Pailles, à Bell Village et à Plaine Lauzun. Puis-je du coup, solliciter le ministre pour que les travaux soient réalisés afin de



déboucher et peut-être même d'optimiser l'évacuation de ce drain sur la Colline de Bonnefin.  
Merci.

**The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr D. Balgobin):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken good note of the request of the hon. Member and I am surely going to transmit the message to my colleague.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

(8.24 p.m.)

### **PAUL TAUREAU- VALLÉE DES PRETRES – ROAD ACCESS**

**Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My address tonight goes to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management as well as the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development. It is with regard to the small community area called Paul Taureau which is located next to La Croisée Vallée des Prêtres where I have received numerous complaints from the inhabitants of the region. Paul Taureau is unfortunately an area where there is only one entrance which ends with a dead end as we call it. It has a drain network which goes in between the road and during heavy rainfall, the road with the drain becomes in a pitiful state. So, I would humbly request both ministers to kindly find a solution for all the inhabitants of Paul Taureau because as I mentioned, there is only one access to that area and at times, it becomes very difficult for the children to leave home to go to school as well as for vehicles to drive out of Paul Taureau to La Croisée Vallée des Prêtres. I thank you for your attention.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the request of the hon. Member will be conveyed to my colleagues, the Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of MNI.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Lobine!

(8.26 p.m.)

### **CEB OFFICE, VACOAS – FLOODED YARD – INACCESSIBILITY**

**Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My humble request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. It concerns the CEB Office at Vacoas. During heavy rainfall, hon. Minister, the yard of CEB Vacoas is inaccessible to most of the users. Even if you have got just a small plot of land over there whereby they can stand during heavy rainfall, they cannot have access to it because there are works being done there and it is just like a lake now if you go there. So, if you could kindly use your good office so that the CEB could remediate the situation and have those repairs done at the earliest convenience. Thank you.

**The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr G. Lesjongard):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have taken good note of the matter raised by the hon. Member. I will convey same to the General Manager of the Central Electricity Board and request him urgently to do the needful. Thank you.

(8.27 p.m.)

**POINTE AUX SABLES – COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – DOCTORS &  
MEDICINES PROVISION**

**Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de la Santé au sujet de l'absence d'un médecin à plein temps et d'un manque de dentiste au Pointe Aux Sables *Community Centre*, inauguré le 23 février de cette année. En effet, ce *Heath Centre* est desservi par un médecin seulement qui fait le va et vient entre le dispensaire de La Tour Koenig et le Pointe Aux Sables *Community Health Centre*. De plus, il n'y a pas de dentistes contrairement à ce qui a été promis aux habitants. Il y a également un manque de médicament dans ce *Heath Centre*. Je fais donc un appel pressant au ministre afin qu'un médecin et un dentiste à plein temps y soient postés et de faire diligence en ce qui concerne l'approvisionnement de en médicaments. Merci.

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal):** Mr Speaker, Sir, dental services are provided in Community Health Centres on a weekly or fortnightly basis because the number of patients attending can be clustered into one clinic. As for the doctor who is going from one local Health Centre to another, it is all on the different services being provided. That is why the doctor has been transferred. Otherwise, unless there are some of the issues, I will find out the probable reason and let the hon. Member know about it. Thank you.

(8.28 p.m.)

**ALBION – FREQUENT WATER ACCUMULATION – DRAINAGE SYSTEM**

**Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) :** M. le président, ma requête s'adresse ce soir au ministre des Infrastructures publiques et concerne un problème récurrent d'inondation dans les morcèlements, Les Vues d'Albion, phase une et deux et Splendid View, toujours à Albion. En effet, M. le président, les habitants de ces deux morcèlements ne savent plus à quel saint se vouer lorsqu'il y a des pluies torrentielles. A chaque fois, c'est la panique chez les nombreuses familles qui vivent dans ces deux régions et il s'avère en effet d'une part que le système de canalisation n'est pas suffisant pour résorber la quantité d'eau qui est déversée en temps de pluie. Et d'autre part, le canal de Magenta qui borde ces deux morcèlements subit également des débordements avec les conséquences que l'on connaît.

Donc, M. le président, les habitants ont adressé une pétition datant de février de cette année au Conseil de District de Rivière Noire, et j'ai d'ailleurs déjà fait parvenir au ministre Hurreeram une copie ainsi que des photos et des vidéos. De ce fait, je sollicite l'honorable ministre afin qu'il demande à la *Land Drainage Authority* d'effectuer une visite des lieux dans les plus brefs délais et de trouver des solutions rapides et efficaces face à ce calvaire que vivent les résidents des morcèlements précités. Je vous remercie.

**The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr. D. Balgobin):** M. le président, j'ai pris note de la requête de l'honorable membre et je vais la transmettre à mon collègue, le ministre Hurreeram.

(8.30 p.m.)

**NEW FLACQ HOSPITAL – CONSTRUCTION SITE – MUD LITTERED MAIN ROAD**

**Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request tonight is addressed to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. It concerns the construction site of the New Flacq Hospital. I would be very grateful to him if he could instruct the contractor to see to it that all the vehicles coming out of the site wash their tyres. Otherwise, the way they are doing it, it is rendering the main road very muddy and it is causing inconvenience to all drivers and vehicle users. Thank you.

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will convey the message to Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the Ministry so that needful is done.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for today.

*At 8.31 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 11.30 p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### GENERAL ELECTIONS – REGISTERED FOREIGN VOTERS – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**(No. B/110) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the National Assembly Elections, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Electoral Commissioner, information as to the –

- (a) number of foreigners –
  - (i) presently registered on the Register of Electors therefor, nationality-wise and constituency-wise, and
  - (ii) who voted in same held in November 2019, nationality-wise, and
- (b) eligibility criteria for foreigners to vote therefor.

**Reply:** According to section 42 of the Constitution, which makes provision for the qualification of an elector, a person is eligible to be registered as an elector provided that he satisfies the following criteria, that is –

- (a) he is a Commonwealth citizen aged at least 18 years, and

- (b) either he has resided in Mauritius for a period of not less than two years immediately before such date as may be prescribed by Parliament or he is domiciled in Mauritius and is resident there on the prescribed date.

The “prescribed date” referred to in section 42(1)(b) of the Constitution for the purpose of determining the residence of any person shall, pursuant to section 4A (1) of the Representation of the People Act, be the 1<sup>st</sup> January in respect of the register to be compiled in any year.

Not all foreigners are eligible to vote in Mauritius. Only a foreigner who is a Commonwealth citizen and who meets the eligibility criteria specified in section 42 of the Constitution can vote.

I am informed by the Electoral Commissioner, that the Registration Officers register a Commonwealth citizen following a declaration made by him to the effect that he is qualified to be registered as an elector, as provided for by section 42 of the Constitution. With a view to ascertaining the eligibility of Commonwealth citizens to be registered as electors, the personal details of the person are verified in his passport to ensure that he has resided in Mauritius for a period of not less than two years immediately before the prescribed date or he is domiciled in Mauritius and is resident in Mauritius on the prescribed date, that is on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. The residence permit of the non-citizen is also verified and the residence permit number is recorded.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, a copy of the information on the number of Commonwealth citizens registered as electors in the current electoral register which would be in force up to 15 August 2023, nationality-wise and constituency-wise is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

However, in the 2019 general elections, only 838 Commonwealth citizens were registered as electors.

With regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed by the Electoral Commissioner’s Office that the National Assembly Elections Regulations 2014 provide that whenever a ballot paper is delivered to a voter, a mark shall be placed in the register of electors against the name of the elector to denote that he has received a ballot paper.

At the close of poll, the said register together with all other documents mentioned in the Regulations are sealed by the Presiding Officer in a packet, in presence of candidates and/or agents present at the time in the voting room. The said packet is then handed over to the Returning Officer. After the proclamation of results, the packets and other election documents are stored in a strong room at the Special Mobile Force for safekeeping.

Furthermore, Regulation 45(2)(b) of the National Assembly Elections 2014 provide that at the expiry of six months from the date of an election, the Electoral Commissioner shall destroy the sealed parcels unless there is an election petition pending before the Supreme Court.

This being the case and having regard to its own internal policy, the Office of the Electoral Commissioner does not keep any record as to the electors who have voted or not voted at any election.

In these circumstances, the Electoral Commissioner's Office is not in a position to state how many foreigners have voted during the last general elections.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have earlier provided in my reply, the eligibility criteria for foreigners to be registered as electors.

#### **CHILDREN SEXUAL ABUSE (ONLINE)–CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REVIEW**

**(No. B/111) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the criminal justice system in relation to sexual abuse of children, especially online, he will state if consideration will be given for a review thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**COASTAL SURVEILLANCE RADAR SYSTEM – OPERATIONALITY**

**(No. B/112) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Coastal Surveillance Radar System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if same is fully operational and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Coastal Surveillance Radar System (CSRS) came into operation in 2011 in Mauritius and its Outer Islands to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius.

The Radar System comprises eight (8) radars model Bridge Mast with Integrated Automatic Identification System and five (5) stand-alone Automatic Identification System. Out of the eight radars with integrated Automatic Identification System, five are located in mainland Mauritius and the other three are at Rodrigues, St. Brandon and Agaléga respectively. The five stand-alone Automatic Identification System stations are located in mainland Mauritius. The combined system is controlled and manned by a Control Centre located at the National Coast Guard Operations Room at Les Salines.

Presently, all the Radar stations with integrated Automatic Identification System on the island of Mauritius are operational and are located at the following places –

- (i) Grand Gaube – covering Balaclava to Poste de Flacq regions;
- (ii) Pointe du Diable – covering Poste de Flacq to Blue Bay regions;
- (iii) Gris Gris – covering Blue Bay to Bel Ombre regions;
- (iv) Le Morne – covering Bel Ombre up to La Pirogue Hotel, Flic-en-Flac regions, and
- (v) Albion – covering from La Pirogue Hotel, Flic-en-Flac up to Balaclava regions.

In regard to five stand-alone Automatic Identification System Stations which are also fully functional, they are located at the following places –

- (i) Mont Bar Le Duc – covering the North region;
- (ii) Mont Pte du Diable – covering the East region;
- (iii) Mont Jurançon – covering the South region;
- (iv) Mont Simonet – covering the South West region, and
- (v) Signal Mountain – covering the West region.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Coastal Surveillance Radar System at Rodrigues is operational.

However, those of Agaléga and St. Brandon are currently not operational. A defect in its solar power unit leading to loss of power supply to the system in that of Agaléga was detected along with other defective parts which are no longer being manufactured by the supplier. The Police will depute a team of technicians from the National Coast Guard to Agaléga on board the forthcoming trip of MV Trochetia scheduled for the first week of June 2023, to inspect the system and try to operationalise it.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that the radar at St. Brandon is not operational due to non-availability of spares, as these are no longer being manufactured by the company. Nevertheless, maritime surveillance in the region of Agaléga and St. Brandon is being assured by –

- (i) Automatic Identification System through Sea Vision at National Coast Guard Operation Room, which provides information on vessels, namely course of the vessel, last port of call, next port of call, amongst others;
- (ii) Vessel Monitoring System, which tracks the fishing vessels (both local and foreign) that have been licensed by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to fish in our EEZ;



- (iii) Global Maritime Distress and Safety System, which transmits messages such as distress signals;
- (iv) Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing, which exchanges information within countries of the region under the MASE (Maritime Security) programme, and
- (v) surveillance by ships, boats, aircraft and by National Coast Guard posts.

Government has decided to acquire a brand new state of the art CSRS system with the collaboration of the Government of Japan under a Grant Aid of 1.5 billion Japanese Yen equivalent to around Rs520 m.

A Consultant, namely Shipbuilding Research Centre of Japan, was appointed and a survey was conducted in mainland Mauritius and the outer islands including Rodrigues, Agaléga and St. Brandon in June 2022. The final survey report for the appropriateness of the sites was submitted on Tuesday 29 November 2022. Based on the survey report the Consultant is working on the technical specifications and the estimated cost of the new radar system, which will be used in the preparation of the tender documents which are expected to be launched by June 2023. The new Radar System is expected to be operational by May 2025.

#### **ILLICIT DRUGS CONSUMPTION – TEENAGERS & STUDENTS – ACTIONS TAKEN**

**(No. B/113) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to illicit drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of teenagers and students under 18 having, since 2015 to date, been allegedly–

- (a) reported and found to be under the influence of illicit drugs, and
- (b) involved in cases of dealing therein, indicating the immediate actions taken by various authorities concerned therewith.

*(Withdrawn)*

**RODRIGUES – CLASS A, ILLICIT DRUGS – INQUIRIES & MEASURES**

(No. B/114) Mr J. B. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the recent entry of class A illicit drugs in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of pending Police inquiries in relation thereto, indicating the number of arrests effected in connection therewith, and
- (b) measures being taken at the level of the airport and sea port for effective surveillance.

**Reply:** ‘Class A illicit drugs’ is not defined under the Dangerous Drug Act 2000 nor in other legislations. I presume that, by ‘Class A illicit drugs’ the hon. Member is referring to the dangerous drugs under the different Schedules of the Dangerous Drugs Act.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, between January 2022 and Thursday 06 April 2023, 156 cases of dangerous drugs under the different Schedules of the Dangerous Drugs Act have been detected in Rodrigues. Most of the drug cases relate to cannabis, whilst only a few relate to heroin and synthetic cannabinoids.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that all these drug cases are in the process of investigation, and 171 persons have been arrested.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the following measures are being taken by Police and the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) at Plaine Corail Airport for effective surveillance in Rodrigues –

- (i) officers of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) are deployed on a 24-hour basis at the Airport for profiling of suspicious incoming passengers and for identification of potential drug dealers amongst passengers and airport employees;

- (ii) ADSU officers have intensified their operations at the Airport with more vigilance on all flights including international flights from Reunion Island every Wednesday and during loading and unloading of luggage from aircrafts;
- (iii) with the collaboration of all stakeholders at the Airport, security has been tightened to prevent the entry of illegal drugs in the island;
- (iv) intensive perimeter patrols are carried out to prevent intruders from entering the Airport area;
- (v) Immigration Officers perform a security check on a list of passengers which is received 24 hours before take-off and a list of passengers which is received 15 hours after take-off;
- (vi) sniffer dogs are resorted to for checking suspicious luggage;
- (vii) CCTV surveillance system installed within the Airport premises has been extended to the Customs Office and Police Station during operational hours, and
- (viii) one luggage scanner has been installed at the Airport passenger terminal and trace detectors and test kits are being used for drug detection by Customs Officers.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the following measures have been put in place at the Port in Rodrigues –

- (i) patrols in lagoon are carried out by the National Coast Guard (NCG) on inflatable boats, rigid hull boats and fast interceptor boats for off lagoon surveillance;
- (ii) round the clock surveillance by way of CCTV and controlling of access to the port are conducted by the NCG;
- (iii) radar surveillance of maritime traffic over a radius of 96 nautical miles is manned on a 24-hour basis to monitor the movement of ships and other vessels. The Radar Station is also equipped with Automatic Identification System that provides information regarding the name of the ship, its speed and its destination;

- (iv) frequent joint operations are conducted by ADSU and Customs Officers in connection with the boarding of yachts and commercial vessels entering the harbour;
- (v) NCG keeps radio watch and contact with all ships or yachts within the territorial waters of Rodrigues as well as those which intend to enter the Port Mathurin harbour, and
- (vi) a luggage scanner has been installed by the MRA at the Port.

Rodrigues is naturally included in the unflinching fight of my Government against drug trafficking and no stone will be left unturned to rid Rodrigues also of the drug scourge.

**LEGAL PROCEEDINGS – COMMISSIONER OF POLICE – BARRISTERS’  
DETAILS & FEES**

**(No. B/115) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to legal representation of the Commissioner of Police in legal proceedings in which the latter is a party, for each of the years 2019 to 2022 and since January 2023 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) names of the barristers and attorneys who appeared therefor;
- (b) procurement method and criteria used for the selection thereof, and
- (c) amount of fees claimed and paid thereto.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in general, the Police is represented by legal representatives from the Attorney General’s Office or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in legal proceedings instituted by the Police or otherwise. However, in certain circumstances, the Commissioner of Police may have recourse to the services of Barristers and/or Attorneys other than State Law Officers and/or State Attorneys to represent him.

In regard to part (a) of the question, since 2019 to date, the Commissioner of Police has on three occasions been a party in legal proceedings wherein he has retained the services of private Barristers and Attorneys as follows –

- (i) late Me Rex Stephen, Barrister, who was solicited by the then Commissioner of Police in August 2021 to assist Police witnesses during proceedings of a Judicial Inquiry by the District Magistrate of Moka Court. Condolences to the family of late Me Rex Stephen are thereby being presented;
- (ii) Me Ravi Raj Yerrigadoo as Barrister and Me Shamila Sonah-Ori as Attorney who were solicited by the Commissioner of Police in March 2023 in the case, the Commissioner of Police vs Mr J.B.L, The Honourable Magistrate of District Court of Moka and the Director of Public Prosecutions, and
- (iii) Me Ravi Raj Yerrigadoo as Barrister and Me Shamila Sonah-Ori as Attorney who were solicited by the Commissioner of Police in March 2023 in the case, the ICAC vs Mr C. D, The Honourable Senior Magistrate of the District Court of Lower Plaines Wilhems in the presence of the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the procurement of legal services by a public body is exempted by Section 3A (1) of the Public Procurement Act which provides that Parts III, IV, V and VI of the Act shall not apply to the procurement of goods, works and services specified in the Second Schedule. The procurement of legal services is specified in Item 2(d) of the said Second Schedule. Therefore, there is no legal requirement for the Police to use any procurement method under the Public Procurement Act to retain the services of Lawyers and Attorneys.

In regard to part (c) of the question, Late Me Rex Stephen, Barrister, was paid a sum of Rs50,000 for his services. With regard to the other two cases, as they are proceeding, the fees have yet to be determined.

**CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - SOVEREIGNTY**

**(No. B/116) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the sovereignty issue over the Chagos Archipelago, he will state where matters stand as to the discussions engaged with the relevant authorities.

**Reply:** The Chagos Archipelago is, and has always been, an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, as made clear by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 25 February 2019, UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295 and the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea of 28 January 2021.

As I had informed the House on 03 November 2022, following the meeting which I had with former UK Prime Minister, Elizabeth Truss, on 21 September 2022 in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, Mauritius and the United Kingdom have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

Through negotiations, taking into account relevant legal proceedings, it is the intention of Mauritius and the United Kingdom to secure an agreement on the basis of international law to resolve all outstanding issues, including those relating to the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago.

Mauritius and the United Kingdom have reiterated that any agreement between the two countries will ensure the continued effective operation of the joint UK/US military base in Diego Garcia which plays a vital role in regional and global security.

Since my statement of 03 November 2022 to the House, Mauritius and the United Kingdom have held constructive negotiations on 23 and 24 November 2022, 11 and 12 January 2023, and 23 and 24 February 2023 on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

These discussions have built understanding between the two sides and covered issues relating to ensuring the continued effective operation of the joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia; resettlement of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago; strengthening our

cooperation on a range of issues such as environmental and marine protection, improving security and tackling illegal activities in the region, amongst others.

As agreed at the outset of the negotiations, Mauritius and the United Kingdom have taken stock of the negotiations and agreed on next steps. On 14 February 2023, I spoke to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. We welcomed the progress to date and agreed to continue negotiations, with a view to arriving at an agreement in the coming months.

#### **OFFICE OF DPP – PRESS ARTICLES – INQUIRY**

**(No. B/117) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the recent posts on certain media platforms, including on Sun TV News, against the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Public Prosecutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if inquiries have been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **AIR MAURITIUS – FLIGHTS TO CHENNAI, INDIA**

**(No. B/118) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the operation of Air Mauritius flights for destinations in India, particularly Chennai, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

**Reply:** I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd that the airline is currently operating six weekly direct flights to Mumbai. I am also informed that these six weekly flights to Mumbai provide seamless connections to and from Chennai on Air India as well as Vistara operated flights.

I am further informed that Air Mauritius will resume its operations to New Delhi with two weekly flights as from 03 May 2023.

**ECO DEER CHASSÉE – GRAND BASSIN – ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES**

**(No. B/119) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Eco Deer Chassée, situated near Grand Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if illegal activities have reportedly been carried out thereat.

**Reply:** The Commissioner of Police has informed that on 13 March 2023, a case was reported to the Grand Bassin Police concerning a person or persons who might have trespassed the Eco Deer Chassée situated near Grand Bassin.

The case was reported following a search carried out earlier during that day at the Eco Deer Chassée by one Chief Forest Conservation and Enforcement Officer and Officers from the Grand Bassin Police Post and the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare.

The Commissioner of Police has also informed that during the search, the Officers came across, amongst others, leftover food and empty bottles as well as an empty rifle pouch. The articles were secured as exhibits by the Police and were brought to the Grand Bassin Police Post.

The Commissioner of Police has additionally informed that enquiry into the case is proceeding.

**MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE – IN-HOUSE LAWYERS**

**(No. B/120) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the appointment of in-house lawyers thereat is being considered and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*



**AGALÉGA ISLAND – ONGOING PROJECTS – COST INCURRED**

(No. B/121) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the ongoing projects being implemented on Agaléga Island, he will state where matters stand, indicating in each case the –

- (a) project value, and
- (b) cost incurred as at to date.

**Reply:** As the House is aware, there are two main projects that are currently being implemented in the island of Agaléga, namely, the construction of a new airstrip and a new jetty. The projects are being executed by AFCONS Ltd. and are being entirely financed by the Government of India.

I am further informed that civil works for both the new runway and the new jetty have already been completed. Works for associated infrastructure for air traffic control tower, passenger terminal building, aircraft hangar and electrical sub-stations are expected to be completed by June 2023. Installation and commissioning of communication and air traffic control equipment and works related to the associated infrastructure of the jetty are expected to be completed by the end of this year.

I am also informed that, under its Community Development and Social Outreach Programme, AFCONS Ltd. has implemented a number of projects in Agaléga for the benefit of its inhabitants. Furthermore, AFCONS Ltd. has undertaken the construction of a petanque court which was inaugurated on 12 March 2023.

As regards the housing project to be implemented by the National Housing Development Co Ltd. at Agaléga, I am informed that the bidding documents are being finalised and tenders are expected to be launched by mid-April 2023. The revised estimated cost for the construction works is Rs334.5 million, excluding consultancy fees and NHDC Ltd. management fees.

**DETAINEES' DEATH – PRISON CELLS – INQUIRIES**

**(No. B/122) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to detainees found dead whilst in Police custody and/or in prison cells, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof since 2014 to date, indicating the number of cases thereof –

- (a) in which inquiries have been completed and referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and
- (b) having been –
  - (i) prosecuted and the outcome thereof, and
  - (ii) being prosecuted.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 2014 to 06 April 2023, 14 detainees were found dead in Police custody and 62 detainees were found dead in Prison cells.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in 65 cases, the inquiries have been completed. Out of the 65 cases, 60 have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, 3 are in the process of being referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and 2 have been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that out of the 60 cases referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions –

- (i) 58 cases have been prosecuted. Out of the 58 cases, 55 have been filed and in the 3 remaining cases, the findings have been reserved by the Court, and
- (ii) 2 cases are yet to be prosecuted.

### **ALLEGED MAURITIAN OFFENDERS – EXTRADITION REQUESTS**

**(No. B/123) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the requests for the extradition of alleged offenders of Mauritian nationality, he will state if Government has obtained the guarantee from the requesting States that all the rights thereof, especially, in matters of transnational crimes, if extradited, will be respected.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **PENSIONS – OVERPAYMENTS – MEASURES TAKEN**

**(No. B/146) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to overpayments of pensions since March 2021 to date, she will state where matters stand as to the –

- (a) recovery thereof, and
- (b) additional measures to be taken to avoid recurrences thereof.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since March 2021 to date, an amount of Rs72.1 m. has been recovered for the period mentioned, thus representing 60.3% of the amount overpaid.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that over and above measures already taken by my Ministry, additional measures are being initiated as follows –

- (a) enquiries are being conducted upon receipt of list of beneficiaries of Basic Retirement Pensions and Carer's allowance who are not seen on two occasions by the Medical Officers of the Medical Unit during Domiciliary visits;
- (b) MOUs between my Ministry and the Mauritius Prisons Service and the Ministry of Health and Wellness are being finalized with a view to enable monthly data collection, and
- (c) My Ministry is working closely with the Passport and Immigration Office to look into ways to address the issue of dual passports and people travelling under different names.

**MASA – ARTISTS SOLIDARITY SCHEME – UNIFORM MONTHLY ALLOWANCE**

**(No. B/149) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society of Authors Artists Solidarity Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to why the monthly allowance payable to beneficiaries has been reduced to a uniform quantum of Rs1,000 with effect from January 2023.

**Reply:** The Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA) informed that 7% of net income collected from royalties is deposited in the MASA Provident and Benevolent Fund. The MASA Artists Solidarity Scheme falls under the Fund and is operational since August 2010 to cater for members of 60 years and above. In fact, a monthly allowance ranging from Rs1,000 to Rs2,500 is paid to the beneficiaries.

At the time the Scheme was set up in 2010, MASA did not undertake any actuarial feasibility study to determine the financial sustainability of the Scheme in the long run.

The viability of the MASA Artists Solidarity Scheme has been questioned on several instances since January 2022.

With a view to ensuring that the Fund is not depleted over time and that the beneficiaries pursue their monthly allowance, the MASA Board, at its meeting held on 28 November 2022, decided to effect a uniform monthly allowance of Rs1,000 to the beneficiaries pending the commissioning of an actuarial study by a professional consultant to advise on ways and means to sustain the Scheme for the benefit of existing and future beneficiaries. This decision was discussed and ratified at the Annual General Meeting held on 26 February 2023.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – COMMITTEE – SET-UP**

**(No. B/150) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to Artificial Intelligence, he will state if –

- (a) consideration will be given for the setting up of a committee/ central oversight committee to study the implications thereof, and
- (b) the greater sovereign capabilities thereof are being envisaged.

*(Withdrawn)*

**FATF GREY LIST – COMPLIANCE WITH AML/CFT – ACTIONS TAKEN**

**(No. B/151) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the Mauritius jurisdiction exiting the FATF Grey list, he will state the actions being taken to sustain the level of compliance with regard to Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing matters.

*(Withdrawn)*

**ECO DEER PARK ASSOCIATION – SHOOTING & FISHING/ECOTOURISM  
LEASE**

**(No. B/152) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the shooting and fishing/ecotourism lease over 250.76 Ha situated in the district of Plaines Wilhems and Savanne granted to the Eco Deer Park Association, he will state if –

- (a) he or his agent, one Mr R., has met with Mr S. K. C. and Mr K. E. in connection therewith, and
- (b) he is aware of the allegation that a sum of Rs3.5 million has been paid to secure the grant thereof.

**Reply:** With regard to the shooting and fishing/ecotourism lease granted to Eco Deer Park Association, I wish to inform the House that at no point in time, I had met with Mr. S.K.C nor any person or agent as mentioned by the Hon Member.

As regard the allegation being purported, as the House is aware, an investigation by the ICAC is in progress.

**SVICC – TRADE FAIR – OUTCOME**

**(No. B/153) Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the

Trade Fair organized by his Ministry in December 2022 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, in Pailles, he will state the outcome thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**DR. A.G. JEETOO HOSPITAL – OPHTHALMOLOGY UNIT – CLOSURE**

**(No. B/154) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Ophthalmology Unit at the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state if it is closed and, if so, indicate –

- (a) since when, and
- (b) the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that the Ophthalmology Unit at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital has not been closed. At the Outpatient Department, laser treatment and refraction sessions are being carried out on a weekly basis.

In November 2021, due to high rise in COVID-19 patients with the Delta Variant and the non-availability of beds in ENT hospital, all Regional Hospitals were required to open a COVID-19 ward. In this context, cataract surgeries were brought to a halt so as to make space for additional beds. The equipment for cataract surgery was therefore transferred to New Souillac Hospital.

With the new arrangement, 55 cases of cataract surgery are now being performed weekly at New Souillac Hospital as compared to 10 cataract cases which were being performed weekly at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital.

**NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE – OPERATION AND STAFFING**

**(No. B/155) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the National Co-operative College, he will state, since the establishment thereof to date –

- (a) the number of courses held and the number of persons trained thereat, and
- (b) if certificates or diplomas have been delivered.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NEW FLACQ TEACHING HOSPITAL – CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS**

(No. B/156) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the construction of the New Flacq Teaching Hospital, he will state where matters stand as to the work progress thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**ACADEMIES – SPECIALIST ROOMS**

(No. B/157) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Academies, she will state the number thereof having full operational specialist rooms.

**Reply:** As the House is aware, the Academies have started operating as co-educational institutions as from the year 2021.

The Academies offer a variety of subjects that necessitate the use of specialist rooms. These subjects include Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Food & Nutrition, Fashion & Textiles, Design and Communication, and Design and Technology, Art & Design, and Computer studies.

All academies have full operational specialist rooms. However, some requires additional facilities. For example, in 6 academies that were previously boys' schools, classrooms are being converted into specialist rooms for food studies, fashion and textile. Similarly, in 5 other academies that were originally girls' school, classrooms are being converted to accommodate Design and Communication, and Design and Technology.

**MAURITIUS TOURISM AUTHORITY – PLEASURE CRAFTS - PERMIT  
REGISTRATION**

(No. B/158) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the pleasure crafts, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority, information as to the number thereof registered as at to date, indicating when the last permit registration exercise was carried out.

*(Withdrawn)*

**HENRIETTA GOVERNMENT SCHOOL -- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

(No. B/159) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Henrietta Government School, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of pedestrian crossing located on the main road in the vicinity thereof, especially, to enhance the safety of the students attending same.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NSLD – 12,000 SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS – CONTRACT TERMINATION**

(No. B/160) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the project for the construction of 12,000 housing units, by the New Social Living Development Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if the contracts with the consultants have been terminated and, if so, indicate the terms thereof and the quantum of compensation paid, if any.

*(Withdrawn)*

**INCIDENT – MAHASHIVRATRI FESTIVAL – SOCIAL AID**

(No. B/161) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the pilgrims who were electrocuted during the incident which occurred in the course of the pilgrimage to the Ganga Talao for the Mahashivratri festival, he will state if consideration will be given for the granting of social aid thereto and to the families thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**ECO DEER PARK ASSOCIATION – STATE LAND – LEASE**

(No. B/162) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the lease of 250 acres of State land allocated to Eco Deer Park Association he will state

–

- (a) the date of –
  - (i) application therefor, and
  - (ii) approval and grant thereof, and



- (b) if he visited the site prior to the granting thereof.

**Reply:** Eco Deer Park Association represented by one Mr A. T was submitted to my Ministry on 05 November 2020 for the lease of land at Dayot and Mangin Grand Bassin. Following a due diligence exercise carried out by the Forestry Service, namely at the level of the Corporate Business Registration Department and Registrar of Association, the Conservator of Forests had recommended that the plot of land over an extent of 250.76 Ha which was previously allocated to R.K.S.

In line with Sec 3 of the Shooting and Fishing Leases Act 1966, my approval was conveyed to the Conservator of Forests for the allocation of the state land over an extent of 250.76 Ha at Dayot Grand Bassin to Eco Deer Park Association for an initial period of 7 years.

The Forestry Service proceeded with the drawing of Shooting and Fishing/Eco-Tourism Lease on 17 February 2022 in favour of Eco Deer Park Association Ltd.

As it is the practice currently, only Forest officers posted within specific sections, conversant with the area undertake site visits, meet with applicants and then submit their reports to the Conservator of Forests who, in turn, submit his recommendations to the Ministry for onward transmission to the Minister, in line with the Shooting and Fishing Lease Act.

A site visit by the Minister is not warranted prior to the grant of the lease.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR – MEDICAL RECORDS**

**(No. B/163) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to medical records in the public health sector, he will state –

- (a) since 2019 to date, the number thereof having reportedly been
  - (i) lost or are untraceable, and
  - (ii) misused thus having resulted in medical errors, and
- (b) remedial measures being envisaged to minimize issues in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**(No. B/164) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence, she will state the work progress in the implementation thereof, since 2020 to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROJECTS & FUNDS ALLOCATED  
– 2021 TO 2023**

**(No. B/165) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the Black-River District Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum of funds allocated thereto under capital expenditure for Financial Years 2021-22 and 2022-23, indicating the amount allocated to each village council, indicating their respective list of projects and estimated costs.

**Reply:** I am informed by the District Council of Black River that an amount of Rs109 m. was allocated to it as capital expenditure for the Financial Year 2021-22, out of which, Rs51.6 m. was for construction of drains, which are ongoing.

As regards Financial Year 2022-23, a total sum of Rs27 m. has been allocated as capital expenditure for various projects in the different villages within its jurisdiction.

I am placing a copy of the lists of the projects for each village council, with their respective allocations and status of each of the projects for the financial years under reference, in the Library of the National Assembly.

**DIGITALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES – PROGRESS**

**(No. B/166) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the digitalization of Government services, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

**VACOAS URBAN TERMINAL – CONTRACT AWARDED – WORK  
PROGRESS**

(No. B/167) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the contract awarded to the Joint-Venture Laxmanbhai & Co. (Mauritius) Ltd. and Manser Saxon Contracting Ltd. for the Development and Operation of a Modern Urban Terminal at Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) expected start and completion dates thereof, and
- (b) date of approval of the detailed design thereof submitted by the Joint-Venture.

*(Withdrawn)*

**STRAY DOGS – POISONED – INQUIRY**

(No. B/168) **Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the stray dogs, he will state the number thereof having recently been found poisoned on the Flic en Flac public beach, indicating if his Ministry or, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to if an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) where matters stand and, if not, why not, and
- (b) if the Commissioner of Police has been requested to review the footage of the Safe City Cameras in relation thereto.

*(Vide PQ B/135)*

**COVID-19– DEFECTIVE VENTILATORS’ PURCHASE – REFUND**

(No. B/169) **Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the purchase of 50 defective

ventilators by his Ministry with Pack & Blister during the COVID-19 pandemic, he will state where matters stand concerning the refund of Rs 84 million rupees disbursed therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **CWA – SERVICE RESERVOIRS – MANPOWER & SERVICE PUMPS**

**(No. B/170) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to direct water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the number of service reservoirs therefor located island-wise, indicating –

- (a) the manpower available onsite for the operation thereof beyond normal working hours, on public holidays and during week-ends, and
- (b) if the service pumps are regularly serviced and maintained.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Central Water Authority (CWA) that treated water is stored by the CWA in 105 service reservoirs located across the island.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the CWA has informed that the manpower available on site for the operation of the service reservoirs beyond normal working hours, on public holidays and during weekends, comprises Reservoir and Pumping Station Attendants and Private Security Service Providers.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the CWA has informed that an Inspection and Condition Monitoring Exercise is conducted by officers of the Operation Section of the CWA on a monthly basis to examine and test the operating parameters of the pumps, the electrical motor and associated mechanical and electrical equipment at the service reservoirs.

### **STATE LAND DAVOT AND MANGIN – ECO DEER PARK ASSOCIATION**

**(No. B/171) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the State land Davot and Mangin, near Grand Bassin, leased to Eco Deer Park Association, he will state if, on or about 12 September 2020, he effected a visit thereat and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the purpose thereof ;

- (b) who accompanied him, and
- (c) the outcome thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **RODRIGUES – EXPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS – EMBARGO**

**(No. B/173) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the embargo imposed on the export of live animals in Rodrigues, he will state if consideration will be given for the lifting thereof and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** At the outset, I wish to apprise the hon. Member that there is no embargo on the movement of animals from Rodrigues to Mauritius.

From January 2022 till date, the Livestock and Veterinary Division of my Ministry has issued 33 movement permits to the Mauritius Meat Authority and 747 heads of cattle, 1,504 sheep and 1,268 goats have been moved under strict sanitary protocols.

I am informed that the ongoing sero-surveillance being carried out by the Veterinary Services of the Commission for Agriculture of Rodrigues has estimated the prevalence of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) virus at around 7%.

As the prevalence of FMD is much higher than in Mauritius, which is estimated to be around 2%, the restrictions on the movement of FMD susceptible livestock cannot be lifted completely at this stage.

The possibility of movement of animals by other operators is presently being explored by my Ministry.

### **MONTAGNE JACQUOT WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT - FAULTS**

**(No. B/174) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wastewater Treatment Plant of Montagne Jacquot, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the average treatment efficiency thereof in 2020, 2021 and 2022, respectively, and
- (b) whether there is any actual defect or failure preventing the plant from delivering the expected treatment efficiency.

*(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/124)*

### **OVERSEAS TREATMENT SCHEME – COST & BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/175) Mr A. Ittoo (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Overseas Treatment Scheme, he will state the number of patients having benefitted thereunder in 2022, indicating the

- (a) pathologies/diseases concerned therewith, and
- (b) cost incurred in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **“PRIME À L’EMPLOI” SCHEME -BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/176) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the “*Prime à L’Emploi*” Scheme, he will state the number of young persons and women, respectively, having benefitted thereunder since the implementation thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **FISH – CONTROLLED SPECIES & BANNED CATEGORIES**

**(No. B/177) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the present ban on the sale of certain fish species, including the “*Capitaine*”, he will state the reasons therefor and the duration thereof.

**Reply:** As per the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Toxic Fish) Regulations 2004, certain species of fish are not allowed to be fished as they are banned to be put on sale.

I am placing a list of these toxic fish in the Library of the National Assembly.

It is also to be noted that the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry carries out continuous tests on fish samples at different intervals to assess the toxicity level during those periods.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has never imposed any ban on the sale of non-toxic fish species, including *Capitaine*, more commonly known as *La Perle*.

However, as from 2001, the importation of three species of fish, namely *Capitaine*, Butterfish and *Sacréchien* are categorised as controlled species, and are subject to an annual import quota of 800 tonnes to cater for any shortage of fish on the local market, which may arise during winter (April/May) or the end of year festive season (December).

This decision was taken to protect our local fishing operators and fishers. At that point in time, that is, in 2001, there were about 12 industrial fishing vessels operating in the bank fishery, with a total annual catch of approximately 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes.

Unfortunately, no Mauritian-flagged vessels are presently engaged in industrial fishing.

In 2022, 25 boats were active in the semi-industrial fishery harvesting a total of 1,060 tonnes of fish, whereas from January to March 2023, 12 boats have been operational and harvested a total of 229 tonnes of fish.

Since 2010, the importation of *Pangasius sp.* was stopped. In 2013, the Ministry took the decision to authorise import of the species only from EU approved establishments.

The importation of Sweetlips fish is banned since 2020, as this species closely resembles *Capitaine* and it came in direct competition with our local operators engaged in the semi-industrial fishery.

Since 2021, the importation of *Pangasius sp.* is authorised only for the processing of fish balls, fish longs, fish burger, etc., and not for sale directly to the public unprocessed.

Moreover, as from June 2022, the importation of Mangrove Snapper has been banned as this species is also a look-alike of *Capitaine*.

The House may wish to note that the rationale for putting a ban on the import of Sweetlips and Mangrove Snapper is that, once gutted, it is difficult to distinguish between

Sweetlips, Mangrove Snapper and *Capitaine*. Therefore, some importers are selling Sweetlips and Mangrove Snapper as *Capitaine*.

Furthermore, as from September 2022, Butterfish has been removed from the list of controlled species, because, unlike *Capitaine* and *Sacréchien*, Butterfish is different in terms of morphology, distribution and nutritive value. In addition, it is not in direct competition with the other fish species caught by our artisanal fishers.

Furthermore, in February 2023, my Ministry decided to control the importation of salted *snoek* (finished product) so as to protect our local companies which produce salted *snoek*. An annual quota of 75 tonnes is allocated for importation of salted *snoek* (finished product).

My Ministry shall, henceforth, only allocate such quota in case there is a proven shortage of the product from local production on our local market.

#### **INDUSTRIAL POLICY & STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR 2020-2025 - PROGRESS**

**(No. B/178) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Industrial Policy and Strategic Plan for the Manufacturing Sector 2020-2025, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **REGIONAL HOSPITALS' BUILDINGS – GENERAL MAINTENANCE**

**(No. B/179) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the regional hospitals buildings, he will state which authority or institution is responsible for the general maintenance thereof, indicating when the last time roof maintenance works were carried out thereat.

**Reply:** Let me thank the hon. Member for this question which is giving me an opportunity to inform this august Assembly of the massive investment being put in our healthcare infrastructure across the island. More than Rs100 m. is spent annually on the maintenance and upgrading of 5 regional hospitals, 2 district hospitals, 6 specialised hospitals, 2



community hospitals, 7 Mediclinics, 19 Area Health Centres and 115 Community Health Centres across Mauritius.

While we acknowledge the ageing of the buildings, this Government has sustained investment over the years on the upgrading and maintenance of existing infrastructure in order to create a safe and conducive environment for both patients and our healthcare workers.

I am informed that a cleaning team at the level of each regional hospital consisting of General Workers carries out regular maintenance works according to an established work plan. The works consist *inter alia* of –

- cleaning of roofs;
- removing of leaves;
- cleaning of gutters and rain pipes;
- removing of unwanted plants on roofs, and
- high pressure cleaning of building.

Furthermore, the maintenance team posted at the regional hospitals perform a series of minor works which include but may not be limited to –

- painting works;
- repairs of windows and doors;
- plumbing works;
- fixing of water tanks, and
- welding works.

Any damages to existing waterproofing and leakages spotted are reported to the hospital's administration by the maintenance team.

With regard to roof maintenance of buildings, I am informed that, most of the rooftop areas of the buildings are already covered with waterproofing with an average warranty of 10 years. The maintenance team posted at each regional hospital has the responsibility to inspect the roof at a regular interval and report any damage.

Whenever any damage is reported on the waterproofing membrane, the support of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development (MNICD) is solicited for an assessment of the required repairs. The scope of works and required technical specifications are prepared by the MNICD and submitted to my Ministry for appointment of a contractor through a procurement exercise. The waterproofing works is, subsequently, carried out under the supervision of the MNICD.

In addition, let me also inform the House that this Government is investing massively in the construction of numerous primary health care institutions. As such projects for the construction of, *inter alia*, one new regional hospital in Flacq, one specialised eye hospital at Reduit, six Mediclinics and nine Community Health Centres, are presently underway.

### **8,000 HOUSING UNITS PROJECT – PRIVATE LAND PURCHASED**

**(No. B/180) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the project for the construction of 12,000 housing units, now revised to 8,000, by the New Social Living Development Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain details thereof and table information on all the private plots of land purchased therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **SHELTER PURE MIND HAVEN – TRANSFER OF RESIDENTS – CLOSURE**

**(No. B/181) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Shelter Pure Mind Haven located in Bonne Terre, Vacoas, she will state if –

- (a) some residents thereof have recently been transferred to other shelters and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) if her Ministry is envisaging the closing down thereof and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

**UPPER POINTE AUX SABLES, MORCELLEMENTS REY & KOENIG –  
MILLIPEDES**

(No. B/182) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the invasion of centipedes in the region of Upper Pointe aux Sables, Morcellement Rey, Morcellement Koenig and the vicinity thereof, he will state if remedial actions will be taken in relation thereto as a matter of urgency.

**Reply:** I wish to point out that there was no case of nuisance caused by centipedes that was reported to my Ministry in the regions mentioned in the question. However, cases of nuisance caused by millipedes are commonly reported by members of the public after heavy rainfall to the Entomology Division of my Ministry.

For the year 2023, requests for control of millipedes were received on 01 March at Montée S, Petite Rivière, on 06 March at Pointe aux Sables and Albion, and on 09 and 23 March at Albion. These cases were attended promptly by officers of the Entomology Division of my Ministry to the satisfaction of the inhabitants.

The treatment included the application of a mixture of an insecticide mixed with flour on the ground so as to act as a barrier against the movement of the millipedes in houses. Millipedes die when they come in contact with this bait.

I am informed that officers of the Entomology Division carried out a survey to confirm whether there is an invasion of centipedes in the regions mentioned in the question. The inhabitants declared that there was no invasion of centipedes, however there was a nuisance caused by millipedes as mentioned earlier.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry will provide necessary service to inhabitants of the mentioned localities if ever there is any nuisance caused by centipedes.

**POLICE & CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL – INTRODUCTION**

(No. B/183) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the

proposed introduction in the Assembly of the Police and Criminal Justice Bill, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **DUBREUIL-MELROSE LINK ROAD – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/184) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the construction of the Dubreuil-Melrose Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka, information as to where matter stands.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **ST BRANDON ARCHIPELAGO – RAPHAËL FISHING COMPANY – PERMANENT LEASE**

**(No. B/185) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Permanent Lease/Grant held by the Raphaël Fishing Company on the St Brandon Archipelago, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed legal procedures envisaged by Government against the said company in relation thereto, indicating if the case has been lodged and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **HINDENBURG RESEARCH REPORT – ADANI GROUP – MONEY LAUNDERING**

**(No. B/186) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the report published by Hindenburg Research in January 2023 on the alleged use of Mauritius based entities as conduits for money laundering and share price manipulation for the Adani Group, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission,

information as to if it has conducted an investigation in relation thereto, indicating the actions, if any, taken following same.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **NATIONAL GENDER POLICY 2022-2030 – RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/187) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Gender Policy 2022-2030, she will state the recommendations contained therein and the implementation plan thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **PONT BRUNIQUÉL – PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/188) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the proposed reconstruction of Pont Bruniquel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that the Bruniquel Bridge, which is located along Baie du Tombeau Road (B29), was constructed in 1926 in both reinforced concrete and masonry and has an approximate span of 11 metres with a width of six metres. Presently, there is no footpath for pedestrians along the bridge and the traffic flow in both directions is quite high, given the increasing number of heavy vehicles in the region. The existing bridge is therefore operating beyond capacity during peak hours, leading to an increase in travel time and reduction in level of service.

With a view to addressing the problem, the RDA is proceeding with the construction of a new bridge with a larger width, that is, of 12 metres which will cater for two-way traffic with appropriate footpath for pedestrians, based on international standards. The project also consists of the realignment of the existing approaches with a view to eliminating sharp bends, improving visibility and minimising risks of accidents.

The scope of works are as follows –

- (i) design and construction of a new bridge and bridge approaches on each side of the bridge to the required standards;
- (ii) re-alignment of the Baie du Tombeau Road (B29) and connection with existing and new roads;
- (iii) design and construction of a signalised junction at the intersection of the existing Road (B29) with the realigned segment;
- (iv) construction of raised concrete footpath, concrete, masonry drains, retaining structures, bus laybys and bus shelters;
- (v) displacement of existing utility services;
- (vi) provision of road lighting and road safety equipment, such as traffic lights, road marking, road humps, reflective road studs, traffic signs, information panels, handrails, guardrails, concrete barriers and road lighting, and
- (vii) landscaping works.

The construction of the Pont Bruniquel project has been awarded to General Construction Company Ltd for the sum of Rs171.2 m., inclusive of VAT. The project is expected to start in April 2023 and would be completed in one year.

#### **CHILD SEX TOURISM – UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR REPORT – PREVENTIVE ACTIONS**

**(No. B/189) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to child sex tourism, he will state the measures being taken by his Ministry in the light of the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children in relation thereto, indicating if consideration will be given for the setting up of a specialised unit to prevent and address the proliferation thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **ROCHE TERRE – FOOTBALL PITCH – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/190) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a football pitch in Roche Terre, as announced in the Budget Speech 2022-2023, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

**WINNERS OUTLET & UBP PLANT, TERRE ROUGE – TRAFFIC  
DECONGESTION**

**(No. B/191) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the traffic problems at Terre Rouge, near the Winners outlet and the UBP plant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to the solutions being envisaged thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CEB (GREEN ENERGY) CO. LTD. – BOARD COMPOSITION**

**(No. B/192) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the CEB (Green Energy) Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the present composition of the board thereof, indicating the monthly remuneration payable to members of the board thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**MFA – TEMPORARY COMMITTEE**

**(No. B/193) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a Temporary Committee following the dissolution of the Managing Committee of the Mauritius Football Association, he will –

(a) state where matters stand, and

(b) table all correspondences exchanged with the *Fédération Internationale de Football* and the Mauritius Olympic Committee in relation thereto.

(Vide PQ B/126)

### **RODRIGUES – PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/194) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the implementation of projects by the National Development Unit (NDU) in Rodrigues, he will state the –

- (a) status of the Memorandum of Understanding between his Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in relation thereto, indicating if the prior approval of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is required for project implementation, and
- (b) number of projects -
  - (i) implemented thereat since 2012 to date, and
  - (ii) earmarked for implementation in the next two years.

**Reply:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the National Development Unit (NDU) and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) on 29 June 2016 with the objective to establishing close cooperation and effective collaboration in the setting up of a Citizen's Advice Bureau in Rodrigues so as to support the development of the island as an integral part of Mauritius.

The collaboration included the physical set up of a Citizen's Advice Bureau in Rodrigues whereby the RRA would provide for the proper office space for the operation of the Bureau, comprising amongst others, office accommodation for the Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS), the Regional Development Officer (RDO), the CAB Organiser and other supporting staff.

According to Section (d) of the MOU, the NDU shall work out a yearly list of projects in consultation with the PPS for Rodrigues. However, the prior approval of the RRA has to be sought before commencing a project in Rodrigues according to the RRA Act.



In principle, consultations are held with the respective Departmental Heads of the relevant Commission and prior clearance is obtained from the RRA before implementation of a project. In addition, the latter is kept informed of the project's status.

It is to be noted that the MOU, which was signed on 29 June 2016, is still in force as no notice of termination has been given by either party as at date.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the following ten drain projects to the tune of some Rs611 m. have been completed since 2016 till date –

- a) Drainage Works at Port Mathurin;
- b) Drainage Works at Fond Baie aux Huîtres, Allée Tamarin;
- c) Drainage Works at Lataniers, Petit Gabriel, Pas Jerome;
- d) Drainworks at Rivière Cocos;
- e) Drainworks at Camp du Roi;
- f) Drainworks at Grande La Fourche Mangues;
- g) Drainworks at Port Mathurin - Phase II;
- h) Raising of Ford at Baie Malgache;
- i) Raising of Ford at Port Sud Est, and
- j) Drainworks at Anse Ally.

With a view to alleviating the flooding issues in Rodrigues, the NDU had, on 10 November 2022, appointed Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd as Consultant for a contract amount of Rs37,179,500 for the design, supervision and management of flood mitigation measures in the island of Rodrigues comprising the following eleven drain projects –

- a) Raising of Fords at Mourouck 1 and 2;
- b) Drainworks at Anse Aux Anglais;
- c) Drainworks at Quatre Vents - Dans Darisse;
- d) Raising of Fords at Diamant 1 and 2;
- e) Raising of Fords at Grande Baie;

- f) Drainworks at Accasia;
- g) Raising of Fords at Baie du Nord;
- h) Raising of Fords at Baie Topaze and Box Culvert Upstream;
- i) Raising of Fords at Rivière Cocos;
- j) Raising of Fords at Pistache, and
- k) Port Mathurin Phase III.

The Consultancy services are ongoing and the eleven projects are still at preliminary design stage.

Furthermore, the following two amenities projects, estimated at some Rs6 m., have also been earmarked for implementation during the course of this financial year –

- a) Construction of Mini Soccer Pitch at Terre Rouge College, and
- b) Construction of Outdoor Gym at Papayes at Malabar.

#### **STATE TRADING CORPORATION – PRICE STABILIZATION ACCOUNT**

**(No. B/195) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Price Stabilization Account, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the quantum of funds available therein
  - (i) in September 2022, and
  - (ii) presently available
- (b) the reasons for the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 on the date same was promulgated, and
- (c) table copy of all cashflows therefrom since September 2022.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **FISHERIES PROTECTION SERVICE – OFFICERS – CHANGE IN POSTING**

**(No. B/196) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fisheries Protection Service, he will state the number of officers thereof having been transferred since January 2023, indicating the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I am informed that change in posting is a normal course of action in the Public Service. Thus, any Public Officer is liable to be posted to any Ministry or to any Department for the smooth running of the Service. The purpose is to allow Officers of the different cadres to gain exposure in all aspects of their work.

According to records available, since January 2023, my Ministry has effected the transfer of 11 Fisheries Protection Officers.

The reasons for the change in posting are as follows –

- i. following the promotion of Fisheries Protection Officers to higher posts;
- ii. replacement of Officers proceeding on retirement;
- iii. replacement of Officers proceeding on long vacation leave or sick leave, and
- iv. redeployment to address shortage of staff or increase in workload in a particular fisheries post.

#### **LA VIGIE-LA BRASSERIE LINK ROAD, PHASE 1 – M1 MOTORWAY - MEASURES**

**(No. B/197) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the construction of Phase 1 of the La Vigie-La Brasserie Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the measures being envisaged at M1 Motorway.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CWA – WATER PIPES – BURSTING – MEASURES**

**(No. B/198) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water pipes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures

being undertaken to reduce the bursting thereof and the time taken for the carrying out of remedial measures in case thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DIGITALISATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM 2018 – BIDDERS**

**(No. B/199) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the organisation of the International Conference on Digitalisation and Sustainable Tourism in 2018, awarded to Sparks Event and Concept Ltd. for, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to the –

- (a) bid amount thereof;
- (b) names of the other bidders therefor, together with the respective bid amounts.

*(Withdrawn)*

**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – GYMNASIUM FACILITIES**

**(No. B/200) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the State Secondary Schools, she will state the number thereof fully equipped with operational gymnasium facilities.

*(Withdrawn)*

**BABY S. – SHELTER – PLACEMENT**

**(No. B/201) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to Baby S., she will state if consideration will be given for the return thereof to one of the shelters operating under the aegis of her Ministry and, if so, give details thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**AUTISM - REPORTED NUMBER**

**(No. B/202) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to patients suffering from autism, he will state the reported number thereof as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES/CHITRAKOOT - FLOOD MITIGATION -  
CONSULTANCY STUDY**

**(No. B/203) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the commissioning of a consultancy study for flood mitigation for the regions of Vallée des Prêtres/Chittrakoot, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Land Drainage Authority, information as to where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 20 - BROKEN & LEAKING WATER PIPES - SURVEY**

**(No. B/204) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if a survey has been commissioned to assess the number of broken and leaking water pipes in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière and if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**EBÈNE-RÉDUIT METRO EXPRESS LINE - REVENUE COLLECTED**

**(No. B/205) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Ebène-Réduit Metro Express line, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to the total revenue collected therefrom as at to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

**PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS – LOCAL STOCK**

**(No. B/206) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products,

he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if there is an acute shortage of certain medications on the local market, both in the public and private health sectors and, if so, indicate the actions taken to ensure continuous availability thereof.

*(Withdrawn)*

**PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT - MALABO PROTOCOL - LEGISLATIVE  
ORGAN**

**(No. B/208) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the ratification by Mauritius of the Malabo Protocol of the African Union purporting, *inter alia*, to extend the powers of the Pan African Parliament into a full-fledge legislative organ, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

**RENAL TRANSPLANT – STATISTICS, RENAL TRANSPLANT UNIT &  
RENAL REGISTRY**

**(No. B/209) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to renal transplant, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof performed in regional hospitals since October 2022 to date, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for the setting up of a –
  - (i) Renal Transplant Unit at the Jawarhal Nehru Hospital, and
  - (ii) renal registry in Mauritius.

*(Withdrawn)*