

**SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY****PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)****FIRST SESSION****TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2021****CONTENTS**

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BILLS (Public)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ADJOURNMENT

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	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
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Teeruthraj Huroyal	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 19 of 2021

Sitting of Tuesday 22 June 2021

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

The National Anthem was played

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management

The Municipal City Council of Port Louis (Naming of Public Places) Regulations 2021. (Government Notice No. 133 of 2021)

B. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

- (a) Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (2020-2021) (No. 2) of 2021.
- (b) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2021. (Government Notice No. 134 of 2021)
- (c) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2021. (Government Notice No. 135 of 2021)

C. Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Annual Report 2019-2020 of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council.

MOTION
SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Supplementary Appropriation (2020-2021) (No. 2) Bill (No. XI of 2021) was read a first time.

THE APPROPRIATION (2021-2022) BILL
(NO. X OF 2021)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

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

(11.36 a.m.)

Vote 4-1 –Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Under item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance* on page 134, can I have more details about how the Extra Assistance sum will be used?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Extra Assistance refers to salary compensation, allowances, provisions for salaries and passage benefits, cash in lieu of leave and end of year bonus. That is it.

The Chairperson: Next page! Page 135.

Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 135, Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs33 m., there has been an increase of Rs8 m. Can I have a detailed breakdown of this figure?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The rental building refers here to the rent for the Head Office at the MITD, the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division. So, we have additional parking spaces as well. So, we have for the Head Quarters at the MITD, the amount is Rs19,379,236. The Head Quarters again, at the MITD House, another area of 179 m² amounting to Rs691,529 and then, we have the Quality Assurance Inspection Division at the NPF Building, Level 10, Rs3,186,105; Phoenix Central, 588 m² Rs3,992,724 and for Phoenix Wear Ltd at Pont Fer, Phoenix Rs7,456,726.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 26313.201 - *Current Grant icw Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education*, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister who are the beneficiaries of that grant and why has it been reduced from Rs15 m. to Rs10 m.?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The grant refers to grants for parastatal bodies, MIE, MGI, MES and Open University of Mauritius and for the MIE, it is around Rs7 m., MGI Rs2 m., Open University of Mauritius Rs3.5 m., and Technical Education Centres Rs2.5 m.

For the MIE, it was for the payment of panel members, for the writing and vetting of textbooks, allowances to trainers, consultants for development of curriculum framework and development of material for training.

For the MGI, again payment to panel members, panel coordinators, administrative cost pertaining to the preparation of textbooks.

For the MES, development of materials for training, payment to resource persons for the preparation of papers.

Open University of Mauritius – development of resources for Grades 7-9 in connection with the students support platform.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under the same item, there is the *Extra-Budgetary Unit for the World Hindi Secretariat* which is decreasing from Rs10 m. to Rs6 m.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is because we still have funds from last year. Due to COVID-19, lots of programs could not be carried out.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Under item 22130, we have *Studies and Surveys*, there is allocation of Rs1 m. for next current year but afterwards we do not have any allocation. Which *Studies and Surveys* are we talking of? And why we do not have any provision for the years after?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: One second. We are in fact talking about studies and preliminary project preparation prior to the elaboration of the NYCBE and then the SEACMEQ final study. The SEACMEQ is the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality. It is the final stage of that study; that is why there is no further provision.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Page 135, adequately canvassed. Page 136.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: I need to ask questions. Ministers can circulate their long answers giving details. Circulate the answers. This is the procedure that we have been adopting over the years so that Members may have the opportunity to ask questions.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: So many answers have been circulated!

Mr Assirvaden: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Let me handle the business of the House, please. I have a time allocated. I am handling it ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I have been lifting my hand since...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Let's hear your point of order!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, on se retrouve dans ce côté de la Chambre, à l'arrière de vous. Derrière ! Donc, vous ne nous voyez pas. Je demanderai à ce que vous et la *Clerk* puissent nous regarder de temps en temps pour que vous puissiez nous voir pour les questions.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Let me just reply to hon. Bhagwan. First of all, I take note of what you have said. I am sure the Minister will take note.

Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, surely, I know the Clerk is trying her best to look at the back. I will try to look at the back as well.

Mr Assirvaden: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Good. And with regard to time allocated, I am sure the Whip must have done the job. I am not going to get into that. Page 136. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 136, Item 31112.002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, an amount of Rs90 m. was earmarked for 2020-2021. Can we know from that amount, how much has been spent and can we have a breakdown of the amount spent, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Of the total amount, Rs25,854,562 have been used and the sum goes to projects of construction and extension of schools. I have got here a list of schools where these projects have been undertaken. I can circulate the list. It is the list that I will circulate.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Chairperson, Item 31112.402 - *Upgrading of Schools - Multipurpose Halls and Playfields in Secondary Schools*, Rs5 m. has been earmarked. Can we have details about which schools we are talking of?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We have a list of schools that I am going to circulate.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: A l'item 26323.071 – *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, est-ce qu'on peut avoir des détails sur ce montant ? Je vois R 1.8 m. à R 2.8 m.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Okay. *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, Item 26323.071 ?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Your question was with respect to?

Mr Assirvaden: Est-ce qu'on peut avoir des détails concernant les montants R 1.8 m. à R2.8m. ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Okay. So, the extra budgetary unit for Early Childhood, we have Rs1,800,000 meant to meet the expenses in connection with the purchase of Office and IT equipment for the head office and Rs1 m. for the purchase of equipment and furniture for the authority.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Item 31112.402 – *Upgrading of Schools - Multipurpose Halls and Playfields in Secondary Schools*, an amount of Rs5 m. has been earmarked. May we know the list of schools being upgraded and if a contract has been allocated? If yes, who are the contractors?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am tabling the list of schools and the list of contractors as well.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I will take one more. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can I have some details about this?

(*Interruptions*)

At the bottom of the page, Primary Education!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are moving to primary. The Extra Assistance is meant for the payment in respect of the Project Manager for ZEP and for supply teachers and ICT Support Officers.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Page 137, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to Item 22030 – *Rent*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us details about the rent and the rental agreement?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: For the rent, we have rental of building, rental of parking slots and rental of facilities for events. I am going to table the list and the amount spent.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, very much. Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, I see a substantial increase from last year's amount which was budgeted to be Rs77 m. to Rs90 m. for this Financial Year 2021-2022. Can I ask the hon. Vice- Prime Minister to give us a breakdown in respect of contract allocated to whom and how are the services being delivered?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The provisions are made for the cleaning of school premises, school compounds which include the whole school, the veranda, lawn-mowing, truncating of trees, high-water pressure cleaning etc. and the list of contractors will be tabled.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 137, Item 22030.007 – *Rental of Line for Network Service*, can I ask the Vice Prime Minister, it is in relation to what line for network services and also the percentage of schools that are connected to this network?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Rental for line of network services is meant for paying the rental for all the primary schools. It covers all the primary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Mr Ameer Meea: Do you have the actual figure of how many schools are already connected to this network?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: All schools.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Item 28212.004 – *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, there is a decrease of Rs5 m. May we have details of the decrease?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Well, it is probably because there are two schools which are getting hot meals. The reduction is based on the actual trend in the number of students in the schools, a change in the school population.

The Chairperson: Hon. David, last one.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 137, Item 22090 – *Security*, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister the reason behind the significant increase from Rs47 m. to Rs76 m. and as well, may I have the name of the security services providers? Thank You.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: So, the extra amount refers to the need to provide security services at night in primary schools because of the presence of the tablets and all, we are requiring more security.

The Chairperson: Page 138, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.823 – *Acquisition of Equipment for Early Digital Learning Programme*, can we know for which grade we are being asked to vote a sum of Rs230 m.? Can we know which grades are concerned and whether there have been late deliveries in tablets? Also, what is the situation regarding distribution of tablets in schools?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are talking about Grade 5 and the tablets have been distributed in all schools. There is no delay as such. The tablets were present in class. The slight delay noted initially was due to the class management system but the tablets were there and were being used in class.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under the same item hon. Minister, I can see there was a sum of Rs60 m. voted last year. May we have the details on how was it spent; what amount has been spent?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Rs60 m. was meant for the acquisition of equipment for the early digital learning programme. So, it was an amount left that was used in the next Budget.

Mr Armance: How much has been spent?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: All of it!

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: For Item 22900.935 – *Summer/Winter School Programme*, there is a new allocation of Rs4 m. Can we know the details about what it consists of?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Summer/Winter School Programmes are meant for the expenses for co-curricular activities carried out during vacation in selected schools. Provision has been made for the payment allowance for the personnel involved, the meals and the school materials, etc.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha! We are on page 138 right now.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.007 – *Fees for Training of which Healthy and Supportive School Environment Initiatives*, we have a sum of R1 m. earmarked for this item as from next year. Can we have some more details about this?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, would you table it at a later stage?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can we have another question in the meantime? *C'est à la page 138 que nous sommes là?*

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Page 137.

The Chairperson: Pardon? We are already on page 138, follow your page. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 138, item 31122.823 – *Acquisition of Equipment for Early Digital Learning Programme*, there is a budget for Rs230 m., will the Minister explain to us what will be acquired and who has been awarded the contract and for which grade are we talking of?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The funds will be utilised to meet the hardware costs for EDLP in terms of devices, racks and electrical installations for Grade 5.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are moving to page 139. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 31122.002 – *Construction and Extension of Schools*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister circulate the list of all the schools that are going to be constructed and extended together with the contract value and if the contract has already been allotted, the name of the contractor?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will circulate the whole list with the name of contractors.

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Thanks, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.012 - *S.C and H.S.C Examination Fees*, la ministre peut nous dire le pourquoi dans la colonne 2020/2021, c'est nil?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: *Parce que les examens ont été renvoyés pour 2021.*

Mr Assirvaden: *Donc l'argent n'a pas été utilisé?*

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: *L'argent a été utilisé cette année-ci.*

Mr Assirvaden: Okay.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Item 28211.041 - *Mauritius Secondary School Sports Association (MSSSA)*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give the breakdown and the amount of money disbursed?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The amount of fund going to non-profit institution is Rs19.000,019.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 28212.012 - *S.C and H.S.C Examination Fees*, can we have a breakdown between S.C and H.S.C, just to have an idea and how many students are concerned for the financial year 2021/2022?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The fees were meant for a total number of 19,628 students and this comprises both S.C and H.S.C students and the total amount spent is Rs296,303.446.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.802 - *Other Machinery and Equipment – Acquisition of IT equipment of which Online Digital Pedagogy (Virtual Classroom)*, the sum has increased from Rs5 m. to Rs11 m., can we have a breakdown and the name of the contractor?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The IT equipment refers to equipment for Online Digital Pedagogy and of this, Rs256,000 only have been utilised as at date.

The Chairperson: Last question! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.123 – *Mahatma Gandhi Institute*, I take note of a substantial increase in relation to the budget earmarked for the financial year 2021/2022 from Rs6 m. to Rs16 m., can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister enlighten the House as to how this sum is going to be spent and whether there is any allocation of contract to be awarded and if so to whom? Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is meant for electrical works, renovation and lighting and electrical system of the MGI auditorium, the furniture, equipment, acquisition of vehicles and also renovation of the green room. I guess the contract has already been allocated so I will ask for the contractor's name and I will inform the House.

The Chairperson: Page 140. Hon. Ms. Bérenger!

Ms Bérenger: Thank you. Item 31112.042 – *Construction of Building – Regional Training Centre at Beau Vallon*, can we have more details about this project, when it will be completed and the name of the company to whom the contract has been allocated, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The contract has not yet been allocated. We are still at design stage. The project value is Rs219 m. but the contract has not been awarded yet.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: On page 140, Item 28211.023 – *Special Education Needs Schools*. There is a budget allocation of Rs137 m. Can we know the details about the schools which are getting these allocations?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is a contribution going for the salaries of the staff: the managers, teachers, carers and all the workers, as well as psychologists and occupational therapists. A basic of per capita grant amounting to Rs6,000 per child; a yearly per capita grant amounting to Rs5,200, which covers the cost of teaching aids, etc., and a supplementary feeding programme of Rs75 per meal per day for each learner.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. It is with regard to page 139, Item 26313.122 – *Rabindranath Tagore Institute*. Can we know why there has been a reduction in the budget being allocated to that Institute?

The Chairperson: You should follow the page. It is page 140. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 31112.042 – *Construction of Building - Regional Training Centre at Beau Vallon*. Can we know exactly the location of the project? Is it going to be on the football pitch of Beau Vallon?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I think that we have already earmarked an area for the building and another plot for the football pitch; half of it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under Item 28211.023 – *Special Education Needs School*, can I know what amount has been disbursed out of the Rs125 m. and if the hon. Minister can table a list of schools that benefit from this budget?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This whole amount is disbursed to the schools, and I am going to table a list of the SEN schools. There are around 54 SEN schools.

The Chairperson: We will take a last question. Hon. Quirin! No? Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.043 – *Fees for Adaptation of Textbooks*. May we have an idea what exactly we are talking of? Adaptation of textbooks?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is an adaptation of textbooks –

- (a) for students with special education needs, those with visual impairment; Grade 4 and Grade 6;
- (b) Adaptation of primary schools readiness;
- (c) Grade 1, mathematics for intellectually impaired students, for all autistic students;
- (d) exemplary mathematics Grade 1;
- (e) teachers' information book for intellectual disability and autism, and
- (f) videos as support material work.

The Chairperson: We have passed the time for page 140. Page 141! Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: I have a question on page 140.

The Chairperson: Okay, fair enough. We have passed the time.

Mr Bodha: My question is very simple. It is the number of students for special education needs...

The Chairperson: Okay, I will give you this one, exceptionally.

Mr Bodha: ...the number of students who are undergoing special education needs in Mauritius.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is 2,377.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Page 141. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.020 – *Student Scholarship Schemes for Vulnerable Households*. I find that there has been a massive drop from Rs8 m. to Rs3 m. in the budget allocation for these kids. Will the hon. Minister explain why?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is most probably due to the fact that the family income is not according to the eligibility criteria set.

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

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.821 – *Acquisition of Braille PC/Notebook*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House of the number of students eligible for the Braille PC/Notebook?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will find the number and give it to the hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Next question, hon. Armance! Next question, not next page. Page 141!

Mr Armance: On Item 31122.821 – *Acquisition of Braille PC/Notebook*. Can the hon. Minister table the list of the beneficiaries?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: There are 12 beneficiaries of the Braille PC/Notebook, but I don't have the names. So, I will just give the hon. Member the number. I don't think we can give the names of these children.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.010 – *Postgraduate Scholarship Schemes (b) Post graduate scheme for Laureates*. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if she has the figures of the number of laureates who actually come back to Mauritius?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to refer to Item 28212.011 – *State of Mauritius/Additional Scholarships*. Can we have the number of additional scholarships and the selected areas of studies, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This will be tabled, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bodha: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under Item 31112.002 – *Construction and Extension of Schools - Setting up of SEN Resource and Development Units in 5 Primary Schools*, may we know the five primary schools earmarked?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Rose Belle, Curepipe, Quatre Bornes, Port Louis and Black River. These schools have not been identified yet.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger! Last question on page 141.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment*. Can we have a breakdown of those machinery and equipment, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are referring here to acquisition of Braille PCs and notebooks.

The Chairperson: You shall table?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: For other machinery and all, we are referring to Braille PCs.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 142. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.150 – *Higher Education Commission (iv) Africa scholarships*, I see that the budget earmarked has been reduced by Rs2 m. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister the number scholarships awarded and how many students have taken advantage of this facility being extended by the Government of Mauritius?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since the start of the programme, 99 students have benefited from it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Under *Sub-Head 4-108 – Tertiary Education, Recurrent Expenditure*, item *22130 – Studies and Surveys*, may we have details as to the studies and surveys that have been conducted?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The studies and surveys refer to an EU funded study on the action plan of polytechnics.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre Marie!

Mrs Navarre Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item *26313.150 – Higher Education Commission (HEC)*, could we know who heads that Commission, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Dr. Mohee.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item *28212.032 – Transfers to Households – Scholarship Scheme to Students with Disabilities*, I see that there has been a decrease of Rs1.8 m. Can we know why?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We advertise for this scholarship every year and the number of people who are eligible get the scholarship, and the budget is accordingly decided upon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On top of the page, item *26 – Capital Expenditure, 26323.125 – Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Institute of Education*. The budget moves from Rs16 m. to Rs29,750,000. May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to explain how this new budget has increased?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I have the question again, please?

Mr Bodha: Yes, it is item Capital Expenditure *26323.125 – Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Institute of Education*. The budget moves from Rs16 m. to Rs29,750,000. If we could get an explanation, please.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The increase in provision is due to the refurbishment of the MIE Tower, the ERP Financial System and the renovation works at the MIE canteen.

The Chairperson: I can take only one last question. Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under the item *26313.150 – Higher Education Commission –(a) (v) Research Fund*, Rs20 m. has been reduced to Rs15 m. May we know how the research fund has been used, for which researches in 2020/2021?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I can table the list of the research carried out and I must say that the payment for research goes stepwise. So, once the project has been approved, every year there is a certain amount that is provided for that particular research. So, that is why there is a difference.

I am going to table the list of projects of research work being carried out.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Now, page 143. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: At page 143, under Item *26313.150 – Higher Education Commission – (d) Université Des Mascareignes – Scholarship (Robotics and Artificial Intelligence)*, there is provision for Rs5 m. May we know – for University of Mascareignes I am talking – what are the criteria and the number of students who will benefit from these scholarships?

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad, I am minded to tell you these are policy decisions; what kind of criteria. I will take a better question.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We will submit the criteria.

The Chairperson: Will you reply VPM?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am going to table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Come into agreement the two of you. Who is going to talk?

Mr Quirin: I was before him.

The Chairperson: You were first, I know!

Mr Quirin: Page 143, Capital Expenditure. Item *26323.150 – Extra-Budgetary Units – Higher Education Commission – (g) Open University of Mauritius*. I see that the amount earmarked for this Financial Year with regard to the grant allocated to Open University of Mauritius, has been reduced. Can we know the reason for that decrease, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Open University of Mauritius has a large number of students and derives revenue from the students admitted there. The number of students is extremely high. There are students who are mature students and they pay for the courses.

The Chairperson: I will take one from hon. Bhagwan, and then come to you, hon. Osman Mahomed, obviously.

Mr Bhagwan: Page 143, item 28211.071 – *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions – Higher Education Advisory Council*, can we know the composition of the Council and who are the members?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This Council has not been set up yet.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I refer the hon. Minister to item 26313.150 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Higher Education Commission – (b) University of Mauritius, (c) University of Technology, Mauritius*, at the top of the page for which I see there is an appreciable increase in the next year, which is good. Can I ask the hon. Minister, whether this fund comprises a specific item to enhance the rank of the University of Mauritius, so as to enhance the employability of our young graduates, should they go to International Market tomorrow? Because University of Mauritius is today ranked 2,276th and University of Technology, Mauritius is 6,949th.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are, today, Mr Chairperson, talking about the funding not the projects of the University.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Just be reminded about not putting questions on policy decisions. Hon. Dhunoo, then I will come to you, hon. Ameer Meea. Do not get impatient, I will come to you.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 26313.151 – *Quality Assurance Authority* on page 143, it seems that the amount estimated last year was Rs5 m. Now, it seems to be tripled, Rs12.5 m., now Rs15 m. Can we know why this increase?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Quality Assurance Authority has been set up. Now, we are going for the recruitment of the officers and cadres there, so, obviously, the funding has increased.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, page 143, item 26323. 150 – (c) *University of Technology, Mauritius*. Since we are on figures, the amount has been doubled this year, Rs35 m. to Rs70 m. May we know what is the reason for such an increase?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The grant to the universities is determined by the Higher Education Commission depending on the projects to be implemented. So, most probably for the University of Technology, they have a number of additional courses being offered, and so on so forth; for recruitment of staff as well.

The Chairperson: I can squeeze a last question, hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.143 – *Grants – Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd.* The grant has increased from Rs10 m. to Rs26 m. Can we have the reasons thereof?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Polytechnics Mauritius is coming with 23 additional courses and, therefore, this amount will go for the recruitment of resource persons.

The Chairperson: Page 144! Hon. Dr. Gungpersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.801 – *Intangible Fixed Assets – Acquisition of Software.* May we have an idea about which software we are talking?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is required for the purchase of software for creating marketing materials to be used by the High Education Desk.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I do not see more hands raised. Page 147, hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: For Item 37 - *Primary School Educator* in 2020-2021, there were 3,177 funded posts but this year we see a decrease to 2959 posts, can we know the details for such a decrease?

The Chairperson: Can you repeat the Item Number, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: There have been a number of promotions, educators have been promoted to the position of Deputy Head Teachers and Head Teachers; normally we have to replace them as well.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 147, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. It is at Item 45 - *Support Teacher*, the number has been multiplied by 2; from 235 to 470, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us an idea why?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The fact that we are extending the support to students in high grades as well, initially we started with Grades one and two, we want, at least, two support teachers per school. So, the number has been increased.

The Chairperson: I move to Page 148. No hands raised! Page 149, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 149, Item 33 – *Rector*, there is going to be an increase from 47 rectors to 63. Does that mean that there is a project to construct more schools?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We have already 63 Secondary Schools, there were some people on actingship, now they are going to be recruited on a permanent basis.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I think the hon. Minister mentioned the number of Secondary Schools we have. Now, why the number of senior educator for secondary does not tally with the number of secondary schools that we have?

The Chairperson: No, these are policy decisions.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It depends on the school population as well.

The Chairperson: Anyone on page 149? Page 150, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 74 - *General Worker*, there is a reduction from 416 to 357, may we know why?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Because a number of activities are being carried out by Mauri Facilities.

The Chairperson: Page 150, nobody else! Page 151!

Vote 4-1 Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Rs17,000,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.30 p.m.)

Vote 5-1 Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management was called.

The Chairperson: Page 156, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Sub-Head 5-101 Item 22 - *Goods and Services*, I see that the total appropriation under the Sub-Head has increased from Rs88 m. to Rs95 m. but under Item 22 - *Goods and Services*, the allocation has been reduced from Rs11 m. in 2020/21 to Rs10 m. in 2021/22. Can the Vice-Prime Minister explain?

Dr. Husnoo: Actually, provision for the payment of electricity, telephone and water charges decrease is due to the actual trend of expenditure and the Ministry of Local Government is no longer occupying premises at Bahemia Building.

The Chairperson: Page 156, anybody! Page 157, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson! Page 157, Item 26312 - *Grant to Local Authorities*, can we know from the hon. Minister what is the grant-in-aid formula that is being used actually?

The Chairperson: It is a policy decision.

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry, which number, please?

Mr Quirin: Item 26312 - *Grant to Local Authorities*. I wanted to know the grant-in-aid formula, please.

The Chairperson: It is a policy decision. Hon. Minister, can you reply this?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes. Grant-in-aid, provision to assist the Local Authority to administer the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act 2011. The grant is allocated taking into consideration among others; the human resources needs, the special needs of the area falling under their jurisdiction, the possibility of the council to increase their revenue by way of local rates, fees and charges, the opportunities for the development of business industries and commerce within the area and the state of public finance and the economy of Mauritius in general.

The Chairperson: I can take only one last question. Hon. David has not had any.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 157, Item 22120 – *Fees*, may I know from the hon. Minister what does this item relate to exactly and why is there an exceptional increase of one million for this financial year? Thank you.

Dr. Husnoo: Provision for the payment of fees to Chairman and members of the Board and committees, Consultant for the human resources, audit of the local authorities and the license fee for oracle technical support. The increase is due to the fact that provision has

been made for the conduct of a human resource audit of the local authorities. That is why there is this increase.

The Chairperson: I have only 2 minutes per item. One last question, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for Item 26312.001 - *Municipal City Council of Port Louis*, out of the Rs551 m., how much has been spent on upgrading of children's playground and how many children's playground are under the purview of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis?

Dr. Husnoo: Since the last budget? I do not have the figures but I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Page 158, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 26322.030 - *Local Development Projects*, I have gone through the list at least twenty times. I have not seen any project concerning my Constituency and that of my colleagues, hon. Quirin and hon. Foo Kune-Bacha. Can I know the reason and whether it is the reason for not getting any project because the MSM has lost repeatedly over the past years?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No! No!

Mr Bhagwan: The people of my Constituency are being penalised?

Dr. Husnoo: Just in all Local Authorities...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: You know, you are a good friend of mine; this is why you have erased projects of my Constituency.

The Chairperson: No! No! Hon. Bhagwan, it is not ...

Mr Bhagwan: So, is there any particular reason why?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Chairperson, I can assure the hon. Member that in all local authorities, projects are being done all local authorities. I think you have to check with the Chairman.

The Chairperson: Order!

Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. À l'item 26 – *Grants*, je vois, M. le *Vice-Prime Minister*, R 909 millions, R 944 millions pour 2023-2024. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous éclairer, quel est *the formula* qui a été utilisé, parce que la circonscription numéro 15 et 16 est le parent pauvre à la hauteur de R 25 millions pour R 900 millions. Peut-on savoir le *formula* utilisé pour répartir ce *grant* ?

Dr. Husnoo: I have just explained, I have just given you the factors that have been taken into consideration to allocate the grant. I have just explained earlier.

The Chairperson: You should follow, yes! Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26322.030 - (g) *Setting up of Incinerators* (xv) *Long Mountain*, can we know where matters stand? Setting up of Incinerators; in the list you have Long Mountain.

Dr. Husnoo: We are still at the land acquisition stage actually.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Under item 26322 – *Grants to Local Authorities*, on the top of the page. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether between Local Authorities in Port Louis and in other regions, there is a difference, because for example *distribution de poubelles*, I see in Notre Dame, the Village Council is distributing *poubelles* and the deadline is this week, whereas in Municipal Council of Port Louis there is no such initiative for distribution of *poubelles*.

Dr. Husnoo: This will depend on the Council.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Dr. Husnoo: It depends on the priority of the Council, what they are going to spend their money on, I think.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Just one very simple request, if you try to rephrase your question to be concise and direct, I will be able to give maximum person the chance to intervene. So it is all in your hands, okay? We have only two minutes per item. Page 159.

Mr Ameer Meea: Just a last one for the road.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea, I would be very glad to give you but I have been allocated an amount of time. You have to discuss that with the Whip. I am not going in there with the Whip.

Mr Ameer Meea: I want to draw your attention to the fact that we have 35 minutes for this Ministry and on other pages there are no questions, whereas this one, we have very important question like the Theatre of Port Louis, a project of Rs325 million, please.

The Chairperson: Everybody would have noted that I am listening to you because I am very well-minded to listen to each and everyone. But I am not minded to go into the job of the Whips. I am sorry! I am very sorry, I cannot be minded to interfere in the job of the Whips, talk to your Whip.

Next question! Page 159.

Hon. Ameer Meea, I have answered it. I have told you, you have been here longer than me. I have been allocated a certain time, please talk to your Whip and arrange between yourselves. I do not need this Chamber to keep on like, over arguments and with things which is not within my control.

Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 26322.030 – (i) *Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, a sum of 250 million has been identified for construction and upgrading of amenities, can you circulate the list of projects under this item?

Dr. Husnoo: Okay, I will circulate the list.

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

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 159, under Item 26322.030 – (g) *Setting up of Incinerators (x) Solferino*, with regards to the setting up of incinerators, may we know when this will be operational, please?

Dr. Husnoo: I have mentioned it before, the billing is ready and we have the equipment, it is for commissioning. Basically, the technicians came from India and because of COVID-19 they could not work. They had to go back because their family was sick and they had to go back to India because of the COVID-19. So we are waiting for the technicians, I mean the engineers to come back to commission the incinerators.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, I am very much minded to say, would you allow your junior, Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea to take the question? He is insisting behind you. So, hon. Uteem, please go on.

Please!

Mr Uteem: Page 159, Item 26322.030 – (k) *Construction and Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (iv) Sports Centre at Plaine Verte*, we have been hearing this for number of years now, so may I know from the hon. Vice Prime Minister, whether the Government is going ahead with this project and where matters stand?

Dr. Husnoo: I think I have explained it in a PQ and I think it was last week or the week before. You have heard it about for a long time because when we started in 2014 there were a lot of objections from the local residents so we could not get on with the project. Last year, we got the money for commissioning, I mean for consultancy; consultancy has been done. Now, the Government has allocated Rs151 m. for the construction. So, the consultants are working on the plan. Hopefully by 6 months or so, we will get a *contracteur* who is going to start the project.

The Chairperson: Get prepared for the next page! I will take a last question, page 159, hon. Mr Woochit; he did not have any.

Mr Woochit: Item 31113.442 – *Upgrading of Street Lighting along Motorways*, can we know exactly where it is found? From which part is it?

Dr. Husnoo: Along the motorways.

Mr Woochit: Which part of the island?

Dr. Husnoo: I mean all, from the north down to the south and now, we have an agreement with the CEB. The CEB is going to maintain the line from Grand' Baie, from the north to the south and we are going to pay them 12 million for that, all along the motorway.

The Chairperson: I am on page 161; I have only 1 minute! Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Under item construction and upgrading of...

The Chairperson: Page 160 right now.

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item under *Field Services Unit (33) Inspector*, my specific question is in relation to street lightning. Are there enough Inspectors because many at times

the street lightning in the capital they are faulty and no one reported it to the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

Dr. Husnoo: You are talking about Field Services Unit, FSU, has a different unit. It does not look after lightning; lightning is from the Municipal Council. FSU looks after different services so it does not look after lightning but lightning falls under the Municipal Council or the District Council.

The Chairperson: Page 160, I will take a last question! Page 161! We are done. Page 161, hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: There are three items. Item (46) – *Security Guard (Personal)*, and we have in bracket personal, what does that mean?

Dr. Husnoo: Personal, which means they have been, I mean this is for FSU, it is a department. The evanescence force when they retire we do not replace it but it is personal for that particular person. It is not going to be replaced after he retires.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Number (8) – *Refuse Collector (Personal)*, the last item.

Dr. Husnoo: It is the same.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Okay.

The Chairperson: I see only hon. Woochit's hand for page 161. *C'est bon?* Thank you very much.

Vote 5-1 Local Government (Rs4,318,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.45 p.m.)

Vote 5-2 National Disaster Risk Reduction was called.

The Chairperson: I see your hand raised first, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 162, Item 28222. 025 - *Compensation for the Relocation of Inhabitants (Landslide)*, where an amount of Rs1.6 m. is budgeted. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, what is the amount budgeted for relocating the people in Vallée Pitot who will suffer from landslide?

Dr. Husnoo: Actually, there is a Committee working on that. It is not just Vallée Pitot, it is Chitrakoot, Vallée Pitot, and one or two places as well where the Committee is still

working. We will have to decide on the course of land, and then, the course of relocation. So, the Committee is still working on that actually.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, from Rs1 m. to Rs1.940 m., can we have details of the allowances?

Dr. Husnoo: Provision for the payment of an ad hoc allowance to staff, Police Department and MMS in attendance; allowance to the members of the National Emergency Operations Command. The other increase in allowance is due to the full provision being made for the payment of in attendance allowance to officers attending the National Emergency Operations Command whenever it is activated during the emergencies. For example, this year, for 66 days they had to be present in the Command Centre because of the different situations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 162, under Item 22120 - *Fees of which Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan (AFD Funded)*. May we know if the plan has been completed and why no amount has been allocated for next year?

Dr. Husnoo: A National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Policies Strategic Framework and Action Plan had been developed. Same was financed by the *Agence Française de Développement*. The plan has been done and validated, that is why it is not in the years ahead.

The Chairperson: I will take two more questions for page 162, hon Bodha, then hon. Ramful. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. As regard to the same Item 22120 - *Fees of which Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plan (AFD Funded)*, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether this document will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly?

Dr. Husnoo: I think we have discussed it. Actually, the report was launched officially on 02 March, and naturally, we will have to discuss with the *Agence Française de Développement* and then to decide whether we are going to submit the report. I do not think there should be any problem, but we have to discuss it.

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

Mr Ramful: Thank you. Under Item 28222.025 - *Compensation for the Relocation of Inhabitants (Landslide)*. The Committee that has been set up, will they also consider the situation for the inhabitants of Petit Bel Air and Rivière des Créoles who have recently been affected?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, we have considered for Petit Bel Air and Rivière des Créoles, but not all places are landslide, there are some places where there is soil erosion; there are different categories. You are talking mainly about the landslide. Naturally, we are going to consider those other categories as well.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page163! Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 163, item 31122.999 - *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment (Equipment for National Emergency Operations)*. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, why this sudden drop in the sum being allocated, from Rs8 m. to Rs900,000, please?

Dr. Husnoo: This equipment is a multi-screen display system and it has already been installed and will be operational from the end of June 2021. The cost was for the multi-screen display that is why the provision has come down. Obviously, we do not have to spend this in this coming year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Richard Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Under item 31122. 999, *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment (Equipment for National Emergency Operations)*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell the House what will happen to the 17 tipper lorries purchased last year, as they did not comply with the technical specifications?

Dr. Husnoo: There is no tipper lorry in that. We are talking about national disaster. I think you are confusing somewhere.

The Chairperson: Anybody else on page 163? We are done! Page164! We have hon. Chief Whip here.

Ms Ramyad: Under Vote 5-2 National Disaster Risk Reduction, at *No. 3, Education and Training Coordinator*. We see that it is no longer a funded post.

Dr. Husnoo: There was one last year as well.

Ms Ramyad: Is it an evanescent post?

Dr. Husnoo: No, it is not. We did not manage to get it in the Budget last year and not even this year.

Ms Ramyad: Okay.

Dr. Husnoo: So, maybe next year we will try it again.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum! No?

Vote 5-2 National Disaster Risk Reduction (Rs25,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.52 p.m.)

Vote 5-3 Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you. On page 166, item...

The Chairperson: No, no! Page 165, first.

Mr Ameer Meea: Okay.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: At page 165, under Recurrent Expenditure, item 22030 – *Rent*. Can we have a breakdown?

Dr. Husnoo: It is for payment of rental of Head Office, Port Louis and Quatre Bornes Fire Station, parking lots, equipment at Rose Belle, Coromandel and Triolet Stations, and network communication.

The Chairperson: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. A l'item 22900.001 – *Uniforms*, est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer pour l'année financière écoulée, donc, 2020-2021, est-ce que les uniformes ont été distribués aux pompiers?

Dr. Husnoo: There were some problems with the uniforms at the Fire Services. I myself have chaired a couple of meetings to make sure that they get all the uniforms. But in the uniforms there are different items such as different types of boots, different types of shirts, etc. I think about 20 items. I think most of them have got the items, apart one or two little items, which are not important now, small ceremonial types of item. They have advertised it and they could not get it. So, they have got most of the essential items.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Recurrent Expenditure, item 21110.006 - *Cash in lieu of Leave*. May we know why Rs11 m. has been provided?

Dr. Husnoo: This is payment for unutilised sick leave to eligible officers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 166! Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 31122.803 - *Acquisition of Fire Fighting and Rescue Equipment*, can we have a breakdown of which protective and other rescue equipment as mentioned here?

Dr. Husnoo: Acquisition of personal protective equipment, helmet, fire tunic, gloves, goggles, fire boots and fire hood to the tune of Rs3 m. Other rescue equipment – lifting air bags and ancillary equipment, chain saw and multipurpose rescue saw to the tune of Rs5m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 166, Item 31112 - *Construction of Fire Stations*, can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand in relation to the relocation of Port Louis Fire Station because at a point in time, it was question of building a new Fire Station in the vicinity of the Immigration Square?

Dr. Husnoo: I mean this project is still on but the problem is that we are having - because it is a very big project at the Immigration Square. You are going to have the Yihai project, you are going to have the transfer of the Fanfaron Police Station, you have the fire service which is going to go there but now we have got a problem because we have not got the authorisation, I mean we are still working on it. We have not got it because it falls in the UNESCO area, I mean Aapravasi Ghat area. So, we are working with UNESCO, we have got a consultant within Mauritius now who is working on this and once we get the *okay* from UNESCO, then the project is going on. The fact that it is in the Aapravasi Ghat area, the buffer zone, we could not go with the project until we get the authorisation from UNESCO. That is why we are a bit late.

The Chairperson: Hon, Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I refer the Vice-Prime Minister to the same Item. And I will ask him in connection with relocation of Quatre Bornes Fire Station.

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry, which number, please?

Dr. Boolell: Same Item 31112.024(d) - *Relocation of Quatre Bornes Fire Station*, under Capital Expenditure, page 166.

Dr. Husnoo: Okay.

Dr. Boolell: Alright?

Dr. Husnoo: Okay.

Dr. Boolell: Can you enlighten us, Vice-Prime Minister as to where matters stand notwithstanding the project value there?

Dr. Husnoo: Quatre Bornes, the land acquired, as you know, is along Tulip Avenue and the MNI is currently working. That is the level we are at.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Patrick Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 31121.801 - *Acquisition of Fire and Rescue Vehicles*, may we know how many fire and rescue vehicles are still in good running condition and how many are damaged actually?

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry, once again, I will just get to the Fire and Rescue Vehicles. Which number is it? Now we have different types of vehicles.

Fire fighting trucks, we have a total of 36, number in operation is 17, number under repairs at present is 15 and beyond economic repair 4. You have other ones as well. You have different types like utility vehicles for transportation and all that. So, these are the ones. But I would like you to know that we are buying 20 fire fighting trucks this year.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We have passed the time for this item. Page 167! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 167, we have 1,169 posts that are funded. Can I ask the hon. Minister in terms of gender balance, how many men and women are employed in terms of ratio in the fire services?

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry. Which number was it?

The Chairperson: Item number, hon. Ameer Meea?

Dr. Husnoo: What is the item number, please?

The Chairperson: What item number?

Mr Ameer Meea: But the vote itself, Vote 5-3. We have a total number of posts, 1169 in total.

The Chairperson: The top number.

Dr. Husnoo: I do not have the figures with me but I think it was roughly about 10% female compared to 90% male. I think there is a problem there. Because a lot of our facilities were built, a lot of the fire stations were built for male. But now with the intake of females, you have to refurbish these fire stations providing the different facilities for female as well. I think that is one of the problems. But I think the figure is about 10%. We will circulate it later if you want.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem! And I will take a last question from hon. Bodha.

Mr Uteem: On the same page 167, Item 8 – *Firefighter*, I see that the numbers of firefighters are being reduced from 938 to 914. May I know the reason for that reduction?

Dr. Husnoo: The scheme of service is being reviewed in connection with the requirement for mandatory possession of a goods vehicle licence within a period of 3 years as from the date of entry. That is why they have not been taken on board yet.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Done.

The Chairperson: Done! Hon. Dhunoo, you can have it on 167.

Mr Dhunoo: 169.

The Chairperson: Okay. Fair enough!

Vote 5-3 – Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services (Rs950,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(1.02 p.m.)

Vote 5-4 – Mauritius Meteorological Services was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote 5-4, under Item 22120 – *Fees* as regards to the Japan International Cooperation Agency Funding.

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry. Which number, please?

Mr Bodha: 22120 - *Enhancing Meteorological Observation, Weather Forecasting and Warning Capabilities (JICA Funded)*, we have budgets of Rs6.2m, Rs1.35m., Rs19.15m., can the Vice-Prime Minister enlighten the House as to the staging of this project?

Dr. Husnoo: This is the fee for training of which *Enhancing of Observation of Weather Forecasting* running with JICA Funded, training and local training as well.

Provision made for the local training at MMS, training at Open University of Mauritius, diploma course in Telecommunications, Engineering for Meteorological Telecommunication technician cadre and other courses provided by the Mauritius Standard Bureau and Civil Service College. Basically that's what it is. Then we have the fees for the consultants and all that

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 168, Item 22030 – *Rent*, this year there is an amount of Rs500, 000 that is budgeted compared to Rs0 last year.

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry which item number please? 22030 – *Rent*, okay.

Mr Ameer Meea: May I ask the Minister there is an amount of Rs500,000 that is budgeted compared to 0 last year. What is being rented and where? And what is the purpose of this rent?

Dr. Husnoo: I mean the provision of Rs500,000 under Rent will be used for rental of a building to accommodate two offices at the Meteorological Service at St Brandon Meteorological Station as the actual building will be...we have to do a new building over there. That's what it is!

And now it is a temporary relocation and we are trying to rent it from Raphael Fishing. We are still in negotiation with Raphael Fishing to find a temporary accommodation for the offices of MMS, St Brandon.

The Chairperson: 168 I have done. 169. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 169, Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, I see there is a budget amount of Rs9.2 m that was earmarked for last year and next year it is Rs5.5m. Can I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what are these IT Equipment and who was awarded the contract to supply same?

Dr. Husnoo: It is provision for acquisition of IT equipment for training under the project Enhancing Meteorological Observation Weather Forecasting and Warning Capabilities program. It was a grant from JICA. HF, high frequency communication transmitter/receiver and other hardware and software for climate data base and acquisition of new computers and laptop. High Frequency Communication transmitter/receiver and other hardware and software for climate database and acquisition of new computers and laptop. Basically, that's what it is.

The Chairperson: We take these two questions. Hon Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, page 169, Item 31112.401 – *Upgrading of Office Buildings*, I see that a sum of Rs900,000 was budgeted last year and it has nearly become 5 times, Rs4.3 m. May we know which building are we talking, the list of buildings and if any contractor has been provided, the name of the contractor for this upgrading?

Dr. Husnoo: The increase is part of what I just mentioned. The increase in provision is due to the new project, that is, renovation of Agaléga Station. Just now, I answered about the temporary relocation, this is for a permanent station at Agaléga. Then, we have the renovation of toilets and showers at MMS in Vacoas and then we have Phase 2 of rewiring, electrical work at Vacoas.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 26210 - *Contribution to International Organisations*, I see there are four organisations which will contribute substantial amount. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister about the details of this and whether we benefit from data sharing to enhance our ability to forecasting?

Dr. Husnoo: Firstly, it is contribution to World Meteorological Organisation. I think that speaks for itself because we get a lot for World Meteorological Organisation. It is contribution to World Meteorological Organisation Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is very important. You would agree as well. Then, we have the contribution to African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development.

Mauritius forms part of the WMO Regional Association which groups 53 African States. The African Centre of Meteorological Application for development is an African weather office based in Niger. It was established in 1987 with the objective of reducing disasters associated with weather and climate risks. Mauritius is a Member since the

establishment. It demonstrates, because there is a lot of interaction between Mauritius being in the African Continent. So, it is to kind of share information with the African Continents as well. That is the third one.

The fourth one is contribution to Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa. I mean, Mauritius has been invited to join the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System which you realise is very important. The MOU between Mauritius and RIMES, drafted and cleared by SLO, we are still waiting. Mauritius will benefit in many ways namely Tsunami and Earthquake Alert and other advisory related to weather and climate change once we eventually join the RIMES.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over for this item! Page 170, hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, *j'ai une question à deux volets. Le directeur, est-ce qu'il est sur contrat ou on establishment, et l'identité des deux Deputy Directors ?*

Dr. Husnoo: I think the Director is on contract. And what is the question about the two Deputy Directors?

Mr Assirvaden: *L'identité des deux Deputy Directors?*

Dr. Husnoo: I do not have the names, but I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: No more question for page 170.

Vote 5-4 Mauritius Meteorological Services (Rs116,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

At 1.10 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.07 p.m., with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Please be seated!

(3.07 p.m.)

Vote 6-1 Land Transport and Light Rail was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I would like to intervene on Item 20100- Allowance to Minister, on page 174. I move that this Budget Item be reduced by a token sum of Rs10 to

express our dissatisfaction, *dégoût*, sur les remarques racistes qu'a fait le ministre sur l'honorable Paul Bérenger l'autre jour en le traitant de colon. C'est honteux de la part d'un ministre de la République, qui est payé des deniers publics, de venir le traiter de...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Je propose. Je n'ai pas terminé. Je propose que...

The Chairperson: No, no, no.

Mr Bhagwan: Je propose que....

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hold on!

(*Interruptions*)

Hold on, hon. Bhagwan!

(*Interruptions*)

Hold on, please! It is gentleman like to listen to when the Chairperson is talking. And I am sure you are a gentleman.

(*Interruptions*)

No, no! Wait. Order! Everybody wants to talk while I am talking? Please do! Please do!

Mr Bhagwan: *Propos racistes!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Show the public, show everybody how ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: *Un honorable membre, premier député*

The Chairperson: Order! We raise the session for 5 minutes.

At 3.09 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.12 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Please be seated!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Ganoo: There has been a motion which has been made against me seconded. At least give me the chance to answer and then you give your ruling, please, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: No. No. Sure.

Mr Ganoo: Let me say what I have to say because this motion is against me. There is an allegation which has been made against me in this motion.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order! Hon. Minister, there is a motion. I am minded to give my ruling and I am minded to listen to you after my ruling. Please!

Mr Ganoo: I can, with all due respect ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Minister, I appreciate your concern, you want to help me but this motion was couched, right now. I think I should give a ruling rather than being helped. So please, allow me.

So, first of all, let me refer hon. Members to Standing Orders, Section 73, subsection 7. I will read it for the purpose of all Members –

“Any Member may move an amendment to reduce by Rs ... the sum to be allotted for any Vote of Expenditure in respect of any sub-head or item therein. No motion for the reduction of any item provided by statute can be presented.”

Your motion at this stage, hon. Bhagwan, is not receivable. Thank you very much. I will listen to your point if you have any further point to make.

Mr Uteem: From your interpretation - It says here -

“No motion for the reduction of any item provided by statute can be presented.”

Here we are not talking about the Motion for reduction of any item provided by statute. So the Motion is receivable, in my humble opinion, under Section 73, Subsection 7 of Standing Orders.

The Chairperson: First of all, I have not yet given you the floor. I will come to you. You are in a rush. I am not in any rush. Alright, I will come to you. I will listen to the hon. Minister, first of all.

Mr Assirvaden: Mr Chairperson, on a point of order

The Chairperson: Wait! I will come to you. I will listen to your point of order.

Mr Assirvaden: Mais vous allez permettre à l'honorable Ganoo....

(Interruptions)

Il va commenter sur votre plea!

The Chairperson: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, if hon. Members do not appreciate...

(Interruptions)

Order! If hon. Members from either side do not appreciate that I am listening to everyone, to the best of my abilities, I can try otherwise. And I am sure nobody wants me to go otherwise. Let us listen to the Minister. I will come to you on a point of order. One by one.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, you are perfectly right in your ruling. There are precedents in this House where the attempt to reduce the salary of a Minister or any other Member of the House has never been admitted because precisely, it is legislation which decides the salary, the allowances of a Member of Parliament and a Minister. The only way to amend, to change...

An hon. Member: *Démagogue!*

The Chairperson: Order!

An hon. Member: *Tania kin dire sa!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No! Order everybody!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We are not going Ms Tania Diolle or Ms Joanna or whoever right now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: The only way, Mr Chairperson, to reduce the salaries of Member of this House or a Minister is to amend the legislation and the law. It cannot be done by way of a Motion in this House!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Ganoo: There are precedence! I have not finished...

(*Interruptions*)

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

The Chairperson: Order!

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

The Chairperson: Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo: There is precedence in this House! Secondly, this is...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo: Who called Sir Anerood Jugnauth *bombe ambulante*, the Prime Minister *pinokio, lake sat?*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

(*Interruptions*)

An hon. Member: *La honte!*

The Chairperson: Order! Order in this House!

(*Interruptions*)

An hon. Member: *Ban racists!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

I will come to you. Withdraw the word “racist” to whom it was addressed and you withdraw the word “racist” unconditionally!

(*Interruptions*)

No! No buts and no ifs!

Mr Bhagwan: I remove it.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Minister?

Mr Ganoo: Yes, I have removed it.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, if it is the same point, I will listen to it.

Mr Assirvaden: Permettez-moi, M. le président, après votre *ruling*, vous créez un précédent. Après le *ruling* du Speaker, jusqu'ici, personne n'a eu le droit de faire des commentaires sur le *ruling* du Speaker.

An hon. Member: Personne !

Mr Assirvaden : Aujourd'hui, vous permettez au ministre de faire des commentaires sur votre *ruling*. Est-ce que ce sera à partir de maintenant la norme que n'importe qui dans la Chambre pourra faire des commentaires après le *ruling* du Speaker ? C'est ça que je voudrais savoir.

The Chairperson: No! Just be clear, the way I have given you the floor it is not giving you permission to comment on my ruling neither have I ...

(*Interruptions*)

No! Please, do not talk! Neither have I given the hon. Minister permission to comment on my ruling. I wanted to see if there was anything other than what has already been given in my ruling, which I have rightly done and to add on my ruling which is already there, allowances of Ministers are provided for under the National Assembly Allowance Act and, I am not taking any other points on this issue. The matter is closed.

Right now, questions as to page 174, nobody has a question? Yes, you have a question.

Mr Bhagwan: I can now ask that the general vote be reduced?

The Chairperson: No, it is not receivable.

Mr Bhagwan: One more time, you have asked whether we approve the vote. Mr Chairperson, you can listen to me? Mr Chairperson, I have listened to you, you can listen to

me? Whenever you ask for a vote, we are called to vote such and such amount for this Ministry, I can say, I am entitled that the vote be reduced! You have asked us to vote, what is wrong when I say that I have asked the vote be reduced by Rs10? Is there anything wrong in that?

An hon. Member: Come to the vote.

The Chairperson: No! Let him speak! Or are you doing better than hon. Bhagwan? Do you think you can do better?

An hon. Member: You have mentioned my name, what else do you want...

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, he thinks he wants to do better than you. Are you giving him the floor?

Mr Bhagwan: No. I thought you were making comments on me.

The Chairperson: No! I think your hon. colleague is making comments on you! Let him talk.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: What I am...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I have been there for so many years, for so many Budgets, I know... You have asked the question... *Eh, listen do!* You have asked the question that such amount of Rs2,000,258,000 something like this, be approved. What I am proposing, this is my right, that this item be reduced! You have asked us to vote, I am stating that this item be reduced!

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Good. Order in the House!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, can you ask the hon. Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation not to make remarks on a sitting position!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Toussaint: *Mo pas p koz ar toi la!*

The Chairperson: Hon. Toussaint!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki to gagne zafer ar moi!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Toussaint: *Pareil sa! Mo pas pren lord ar toi!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Toussaint!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, *mo pas pren lord ar li moi!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No! I am regulating the conduct of this House!

Mr Toussaint: *Pas kapav menacer...*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! I am here to regulate!

I have taken note of what you have said but that is not the correct procedure at the appropriate time. We will go to the voting of the item, you vote against, no problem, Okay?

Any questions?

An hon. Member: *Ey, pas pose sa ministre la question personne la!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Any questions? Thank you very much. We are moving to page 175.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Page 175. Hon. Dhunoo, you have a question, go on!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*, I see that there is Rs1.5 m. that has been allocated, can we have more details on this?

The Chairperson: Set out your item again for the Minister to hear properly!

Mr Dhunoo: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*, I see that Rs1.5 m. ... We are on page 175.

The Chairperson: We are good, hon. Minister?

Mr Ganoo: Yes. Fees of which provision has been made for fees to Chairperson, members of Boards and Committees. It concerns the –

- (a) Motor Vehicles Arbitration Committee;
- (b) National Road Safety Council;
- (c) Traffic Impact Committee;
- (d) NTC Appeal Committee;
- (e) Bid Evaluation Committee;
- (f) Departmental Bid Committee, and
- (g) Fair Review Committee.

Mr Chairperson, it is also fees paid to Government printing for the purchase of materials and parking coupons.

The Chairperson: Any more questions on page 175? We are moving to page 176.

Hon. Ms Ramyad! Yes go on, page 175.

Ms Ramyad: Item 22030 *Rent*. The rent for this year has reduced by Rs1 m. Can you table all the renting?

The Chairperson: Item 22030.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, the answer is it is for rental of buildings, for office space at Air Mauritius building, 10th and 12th floor for the Land Transport Division including 8 parking slots, electricity and conditioning.

The 10th floor with an area of 6,311 m² is of the order of Rs296,380 and the 12th floor, for an area of 8,100 m², the monthly rental is Rs385,684.07.

There is also Max City building, Rs63,000 monthly to house the Cash Office and the MVIAC Division and also for renting of 6 parking slots at Rs50,000 per year.

The Chairperson: Page 175, we are done. Page 176. Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060 –*Maintenance of which (a) Traffic Lights, (b) Speed Camera and (c) Road Safety Data Management System*. Can we have more information on the contract and who are the contractors and contract details? Thank you.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, this is the maintenance, provision has been made for the maintenance of building of Rs150,000 such as replacement of some carpets, trunking, which is not provided under the lease agreement for Air Mauritius building. Plant and equipment, maintenance and repairs of photocopy machines, computers, fax machine, air conditioners and then there is also maintenance of vehicles attached to the Ministry and maintenance of repairs of IT equipment and renewal of software licenses.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 176, item 22900.952 – *Implementation of National Road Safety Strategy (a) Studies and surveys*, have been increased from Rs13 m. to now Rs24 m., can we have more details about that?

The Chairperson: Do you have it Minister?

Mr Ganoo: Yes, I am just looking for it. Provision is made for enlistment of consultancy services for the setting up of Road Traffic Database for the country during Financial Year 2021-2022. Bids were launched on 23 February 2021 through Requests for Proposal and the closing date was 05 April 2021. The contract has been awarded to IDOM Consulting, Engineering, Architecture; S.A.U from Spain for an amount of Rs13,700,015, excluding VAT on 31 June 2021. The duration of the contract is for a period of eight months, as from the date of the signature of the contract. It was also for consultancy services for the introduction of an Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS) in Mauritius with a view to improve traffic flow in major towns and villages; increase in provision in order to cater for the introduction of an Adaptive Traffic Control System.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo! That is the last question.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 176, under Capital Expenditure, item 31113.018 – *Road Safety Programme (e) Construction of Bus laybys and shelters*. I thank the Minister for doing a good work, but I would like to have a list of all the laybys and shelters that he is doing.

Mr Ganoo: I will circulate, it is a long answer. I have no problem to circulate that.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 177!

(Interruptions)

No, time is over. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 177, item 22900.013 – *Supply of Bus Passes (Free Travel)*. May we know why there is such a decrease in the supply of Bus Passes (Free Travel)?

Mr Ganoo: This is the document I am circulating for the previous answer concerning the bus shelters.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Mr Ganoo: Sorry, can I have the other question, Mr Chairman?

Mr Léopold: On page 177, item 22900.013 – *Supply of Bus Passes (Free Travel)*. Why is there such decrease from last year to the coming financial year?

Mr Ganoo: The supply of bus passes for free travel, the decrease is in line with the past trends and figures submitted by the Ministry of Education and Private Secondary Education Authority in respect of students enrolled for year 2021 to 2022.

The Chairperson: No more questions on page 177. Page 178! Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Item 31132.109 – *Computerisation of National Land Transport Authority*. Can we have more details about what is involved in the computerisation and whether it is software, hardware?

Mr Ganoo: This is for the online renewal of licenses which will now include taxi, ‘A’ Carrier, ‘B’ Carrier, Road Service Licence, contract car and contract bus, motor vehicle vignette and licence information sheet will be QR coded. The e-Service will serve as a one-stop service available from the comfort of home as any member of the public will be able to make online payment for Motor Vehicle Licence (MVL) by virtually connecting to the NTA system and the insurance system. The envisaged e-Service portal would provide the following benefits –

- (a) include the work processes and business of the NTA;
- (b) provide timely management information for decision-making;
- (c) enhance the level of service delivered to stakeholders;

- (d) better control on revenue collection and significant minimisation of risk of fraudulent fake documents, and
- (e) new user-friendly portal for dissemination of information and service.

A provision of Rs10 m. has been allocated in the Budget 2021-2022 for the implementation of the above e-licensing project which will be the Phase II of the online renewal of the motor vehicles licence.

The Chairperson: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.109 – *Computerisation of National Land Transport Authority*. With the allocated sum, will this service be extended to Rodrigues as well?

Mr Ganoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson. The hon. Member should know that very regularly the Road Traffic Commissioner, and even my Permanent Secretary and high-ranking officers do repair to Rodrigues. I think in the past year, they have been twice to Rodrigues to monitor what is the situation there. This project could be included also for Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 179, no question! Page 180, no question!

Vote 6-1 Land Transport and Light Rail (Rs2,258,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, I asked you to vote for or against, if you wanted. You voted against? The ayes were the majority; it's obvious. Next time!

(3.32 p.m.)

Vote 6-2 Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.

The Chairperson: Question! Page 186, none. Page 187, none. Page 188, none. Page 190, none. Page 191, none. Page 192, none.

Vote 6-2 Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs1,181,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.33 p.m.)

Vote 6-3 Human Rights Division was called.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ene raciste koma twa!*

The Chairperson: Order! No, no, no! Order! Order! Order here!

(*Interruptions*)

Order here!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: *Pa twa, ar li. Ar mwa non!*

The Chairperson: Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bhagwan! No, no, no! You just told me that you have been here for a long time.

(*Interruptions*)

No, no, no! You just told me that you have been here for a long time. I am minded to allow you to continue staying in the Chamber because we might learn a few things from you. I am minded to allow you to stay. And I am not minded to ask you to go take a walk. So, please, withdraw the word ‘racist’ that you addressed....

Mr Bhagwan: I withdrew that, and he threatened me again...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I have already withdrawn the word ‘racist’. I already withdraw.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Mr Bhagwan: But you can look on his side also.

The Chairperson: No, I look on his side as well. Don’t worry!

(*Interruptions*)

No more comment! Please! Page 193, do we have anybody? Page 194! Page 195!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Vote 6-3 Human Rights Division (Rs22,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.36 p.m.)

Vote 7-1 Finance, Economic Planning and Development was called.

The Chairperson: Page 201. I understand hon. Ameer Meea wants to be everywhere.

Go on.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 201 and by the way, I would like my name to appear on all the pages of the Finance Department.

The Chairperson: No, that is not how the procedure works.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, it is just a request!

On page 201, Item 21110.005 – *Personal Emoluments – Extra Assistance*, Rs10 m. is being budgeted. May we have the details of that and, at the same time, for allowances, since it is related?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision made for the remuneration of 7 Advisers on contract and the Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers, and I have got 7 Advisers.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, we need the list and the respective amount that has been budgeted per Adviser and the names.

Dr. Padayachy: I will circulate the list with the names, etc.

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

Mr Bhagwan: Page 202.

The Chairperson: Ce n'est pas maintenant. Trop rapide pour nous. Hon. Nagalingum, go on!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 21110.004 – *Personal Emoluments – Allowances*. It is Rs19 m. Can we have an idea, roughly?

Dr. Padayachy: It is provision made for the payment of *ad hoc* responsibility, extra duty, drivers, entertainment allowance and also allowances in lieu of duty remission on car to eligible staff.

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

Mr Nagalingum: On the same item 21210 – *Social Contributions*.

Dr. Padayachy: This provision refers to contribution to NSF staff and officers on contract as required under the National Savings Fund Act of 1995.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Are we done with this item? Page 202! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 26313.148 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Economic Development Board*, I see that a colossal sum of Rs660 m. was voted for the Financial Year 2020/2021 and this amount has been decreased to Rs397 m. Now under the item of Economic Development Board, there are a number of sub items. This has been unbundled into different sums. Can I ask the hon. Minister, in relation or in connection with output and outcome, if he can give us a detailed list, and as to the number of beneficiaries from the sub items?

Dr. Padayachy: The decrease in provision, Mr Chairperson, is because the EDB schemes will be financed under the National Resilience Fund. As for the list the hon. Member is asking with regard to those who have benefited from the schemes, I am going to table it afterwards, of course, because I don't have it with me here.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Whip of the Government!

Ms Ramyad: The question is related to Item 26323.148 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Economic Development Board* and the threefold increase for the item.

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for capital grants is as follows –

- acquisition of IT equipment;
- acquisition of new laptops to replace obsolete ones;
- desktop computers to encourage work from home, and
- upgrading of ICT infrastructures and software, and also acquisition of vehicles for the replacement of the CEO's old car.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful first, and then I will come to the hon. Member.

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.020 – *Extra-Budgetary Unit – Gambling Regulatory Authority*. Can we have the name of the Board members as well as the fees that are payable to them?

Dr. Padayachy: For the GRA, the Chairperson is Mr Kumar Dabidin, there is a Vice-Chairperson and eight members. I will table the list afterwards.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen, then I will come to hon. Dr. Aumeer.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.148 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Economic Development Board – (b) Support for Trade Promotion and Marketing.* Can I know why there is no sum earmarked for next year?

Dr. Padayachy: I have just said this. Mr Chairperson, I just said that *les sommes vont provenir du fonds de résilience concernant les différents schemes. Merci.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer! I can take one more after that.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.043 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Revenue Authority.* A sum of Rs413 m. was earmarked last year and slightly increased to Rs440 m. this year. Can I know the purpose and the reason why it has been downscaled to only Rs100 m. in 2023/2024? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, concernant cet item, on est en train de parler du budget 2021/2022. Nous avons fait des provisions pour 2021/2022, et nous avons fait les planifications par la suite concernant les 2 prochaines années financières. Pour les prochaines années financières, nous allons terminer le projet en 2023/2024. Merci.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, I am sure hon. Uteem would not mind a Senior Member of your Party taking the floor.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, page 202, Item 26323.020 – *Extra-Budgetary Unit – Gambling Regulatory Authority.* Il y a une somme de R 9 millions comme capital qui est prévue pour l'année financière à venir. Est-ce qu'on peut avoir les détails sur comment on va dépenser ces R 9 millions de *capital expenditure*?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision is made for the replacement of the existing IT systems which are outdated. The IT project will be split into two phases. Phase 1, the appointment of Consultant to conduct a survey of the current situation and propose appropriate information system that will address the technical and operational requirements of the Authority.

Phase 1 is nearly completed, the proposed solution will, *inter alia*, include hardware, software, networking, security, e-services and any other technology-related solution.

Phase 2, the Consultant shall prepare the bidding documents and assist in the selection of an appropriate contractor for the supply, installation, implementation of a holistic information system that shall include but will not be limited to licensing and inspectorate system, data base for court cases, accounting system including the cashier module, human resource system and payroll system, document management system, the e-registry, visitors records, GRA portal. Phase 2 is expected to start in July 2021 and the project will be completed by end of June 2022.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I am well over by three minutes. Page 203, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Sub-Head 7-102: Procurement Policy Office*, I will take it under the Item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*. Can I know from the hon. Minister of Finance the number of cases investigated by Procurement Policy Office and sanction taken by them for bidders who have not conformed to their tender requirements?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, we will table the list and the number.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item *21110.004 – Allowances*, we find that there has been a drop from 1,270 to 600.

Dr. Padayachy: The decrease in provision, Mr Chairperson, is for acting allowance because we have not appointed a director.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo! Then, I will come to hon. Aadil Ameer Meea.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I see under Item *31132.401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, Rs3.5 m. was earmarked for last year and for 2021/2022 no money has been earmarked. Can we know why?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, the work has already been completed and if the hon. Member will see, it is that afterwards for the acquisition of software, often an amount of Rs3.3 m. in 2020–2021, we have provided for an amount of Rs5.3 m. for 2021-2022.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 203, Item *21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs2.4 m. budgeted. May we have the details for this figure?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, I will table the list for the remuneration etc. afterwards. I can give the names; they are Mr Rambojun, Mr Jewon and Mr Dabeesing.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: He will table.

Dr. Padayachy: These are the directors, not the PPOs.

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

Mr Bhagwan: Page 203, *Sub-Head 7-103: Independent Review Panel*, I take it under Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*. Can we know the chairperson of the panel, the members and how much they are paid?

Dr. Padayachy: We got four members, a Chairperson and a Vice- Chairperson. The names are Mrs Ramano, Mr Gunesh, Mr Namdarkhan, Mr Gathani, Mr Mulloo and Mr Mungra. These are the members.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 203, Item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, an amount Rs14.47 m. was earmarked for last financial year. Can we have a breakdown of this amount, please?

The Chairperson: 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*.

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, the increase in provision is for the IT security audit which will be carried out in Financial Year 2021-2022. Provision made as follows for –

- (i) buildings;
- (ii) plant and equipment;
- (iii) vehicles and motorcycles, and
- (iv) IT equipment.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Page 204, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, we are asked to vote an amount of Rs26 m. I would like to know who are the members of the Assessment Review Committee and the fees paid to them.

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, we have got nine members. We got Mrs Li Ying Ping, Mr Golam, Mrs Subarun, Mr Ragnuth, Mrs Ram, Mr Seesunkur, Mrs Sonaori, Mr Mathura and Mr Maistry. I will table it afterwards.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: The hon. Minister did not answer the question regarding fees paid to each of them.

Dr. Padayachy: I just said I am going to table it afterwards.

The Chairperson: He will table it.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: It is being circulated, thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the same Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, may I know from the hon. Minister of Finance the number of cases that are currently pending before the ARC and in particular, the number of cases that has to be reheard because of the termination of the contract of the Vice-President?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, the number of pending cases for the ARC, you have got 4,880.

Mr Uteem: For the number of cases that have to be reheard. I think there is another piece of paper.

Dr. Padayachy: It is the same paper; I am just looking at it.

The Chairperson: You want the question to be repeated, hon. Minister?

Dr. Padayachy: So, you have got 2,666 which have to be reheard, that is it. It is okay?

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Chairperson. At page 204, Item 22120 – *Fees*, an amount of Rs3.5 m. was earmarked for the last financial year. Can we know to whom these fees have been paid?

Dr. Padayachy: For the *Fees*, there has been a decrease which is in line with the policy decision to reduce recurrent expenditure. The Chairperson is Mrs Ramano, the Vice-Chairperson is Mr Ganesh and the members are Mr Namdarkhan, Mr Gathani, Mr Mulloo and Mr Mungra. And I will table the fees afterwards.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Time is over. Page 205, no one? Page 206? No one. Page 207, no one?

Vote 7-1 Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Rs 3,340,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.36 p.m.)

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under page 208, Central Procurement Board, item (21) – *Compensation of Employees*, may we know the composition of the Central Procurement Board and fees.

Dr. Padayachy: So, the composition of the Central Procurement Board is –

- (a) Mr Prayag, Chairman;
- (b) Mr Ragen, Vice-Chairman;
- (c) Mr Maureemootoo, Chairman;
- (d) Mr Aboobakar, Member;
- (e) Mr Bagwan, Member, and
- (f) Mrs Dindoyal, Member.

I will table concerning the fees.

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

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 22120.006 – *Fees of which Fees to Assessors*, Rs9 million this year, Rs9 million for next year. May we have a breakdown of the payment of the fees paid in relation thereto and the name of the Assessors if possible and the number of sittings they have had during the course of a year?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, I will table the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know the details about the Extra Assistance?

Dr. Padayachy: It is the provision made for the remuneration to Chairman, 2 Vice-chairman, 3 Members, 1 IT Technician and 3 Civil Engineers. I will table afterwards the name of the Chairman; I have already talked about this and also the fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad and then I will come to Hon. Ameer Meea.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, may I have a breakdown of this item?

The Chairperson: Yes, it is good, continue.

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision made for the renting of 1631.06m² of office space at the NPF Building Rose-Hill, payable to the National Pension Fund as follows –

- (i) Block 1 - Rs175,784 monthly at the rate 216.28 m² for a total area of 810m²;
- (ii) Block 2 - Rs54,861;
- (iii) Block 3 - Rs64,975, and
- (iv) Block 4 - Rs12,076.

And also the renting of parking slots, provision was made for parking facilities to 20 eligible officers at NPF Building, and for official vehicles at La Poudrière Street.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum, done?

Mr Nagalingum: Already been canvassed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin? Thank you very much. Page 209, no question? Hon. R. Duval, do you have one question, 209?

(4:00 p.m.)

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board (Rs61,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 7-3 Treasury was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell! Page 210.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to item 26210.040 – *Contribution to International Organisations Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountant-Generals (ESAAG)*, can the hon. Minister inform us whether, I know we are a member, but whether on the board of association is Mauritius represented? And how often, against the backdrop of COVID-19, whether there has been any virtual meeting of this organisation, for this association?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, we are a member of the Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountant-Generals and the annual membership fees is USD 25,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Juman and then I can take just one more, Hon. Ms Ramyad.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, a considerable increase from 21 million to 37 million, can we have a breakdown and if we can have the Contractor's name?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase, Mr Chairperson, is a provision due to hardware maintenance, the TAS Server. The IT equipment is for the renewal of the Oracle Licenses, IT application servers and Oracle support, network equipment, PCs and printers and also HMATAS server.

Ms Ramyad: Under item 21110.001 – *Personal Emoluments - Basic Salary*, I understand that the post of Accountant General was vacant, has it been filled, by whom, or if not, when will it be filled?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, there is no vacancy. The post has been filled and I am going to table the name afterwards.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Page 211. Hon. Dr. Aumeer, page 211! Oui, allez-y!

Dr. Aumeer: Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services...*

The Chairperson: No, page 211 now. The time is over for page 210.

Dr. Aumeer: It is okay.

The Chairperson: Page 211, anyone? Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, the last line item 31132.801 – *Acquisition of Software*, there is an increase in the capital expenditure for acquisition of software, may we know which software and who produce that software?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, it is for the development of pension and passage system. The upgrading of TAS from version R12.1.x to R12.2.8 and also the improvement, enhancement to the Treasury Accounting System.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 212? Done!

Vote 7-3 Treasury (Rs161,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4:05 p.m.)

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you. Item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, I can see a substantial increase from Rs38,500 m. to Rs119,417 m. Can I know the reason why there is such a substantial increase?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in provision, Mr Chairperson, is due to the future housing and population census.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. May we know who will do these studies and surveys, will it be in-house or will it be the appointment of a private firm? And also, these studies and surveys, since there is a massive sum, almost Rs120 m., how are we going to allocate this contract? Will there be any bidding exercise, or what else?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, it is going to be done by public officers. There will be no bidding. It is the choice of Statistics Mauritius which will call for public officers. It is public officers.

Mr Ameer Meea: It will be done by public officers, but public officers' salaries are already budgeted, how can it be included in studies and surveys?

Dr. Padayachy: It is an additional allowance that we are going to pay them afterwards. It is the usual practice.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are past the time. Page 214! Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, 31132.103 - *Intangible Fixed Assets - Statistical E-Platform (Maustats)*, can we have a status from the Minister on this project? When will it be started?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provision made for the implementation of a modern statistics platform which will help enhance the operation of Statistics Mauritius by automating and integrating SM Data LifeCycle from acquisition to dissemination using Generic Statistical Business Process Model Framework. It is a new project and it will start during this financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman, then I will take hon. Ittoo! Just two.

Mr Juman: Item 31122.802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, Rs60 m. for the past year, can the hon. Minister table a list of IT equipment acquired?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, there was a provision made for the procurement of 7,700 tablets in connection with the carrying out of the housing and population census. It was done for the Financial Year 2020-2021, however, the census was postponed, that is why we do not need to do the procurement of the tablets again for this financial year. That is why we have got such a decrease in the amount.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Already canvassed, Mr Chairperson. I was talking about the Maustats E-Platform.

The Chairperson: Time is over. Page 215, I will give you one.

Mr Uteem: On this acquisition of IT equipment which the hon. Minister of Finance just mentioned, can he table the successful bidder who won the award to supply these 7,000 tablets?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, I will table.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 215? No one!

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius (Rs314,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4.07 p.m.)

Vote 7-5 Corporate and Business Registration Department was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Page 216, under item 22090 – Security, can we have the name of the contractor and why the sum is doubled for next year?

The Chairperson: Repeat the item, please!

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision made for the payment of security services. The increase is mainly due to new contract to be awarded shortly. It is going to be awarded.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: To be awarded?

Dr. Padayachy: To be awarded.

The Chairperson: Not yet. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 216, under item 22100 - Publications and Stationery. May I know from the hon. Minister of Finance why is there significant

increase in the budgeted amount when we are talking about digitalisation and investing so much in platforms?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, the increase in provision is due to high investment in IT equipment, thus, the need for more stationary in terms of toners, cartridge and others. That is why.

The Chairperson: Done? Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell, you have one last one!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to item 22030 – *Rent*. If he can give us a breakdown in respect of the sum earmarked because there is a slight increase from Rs17,875,000 to Rs19,305,000?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I can table it. It is a long list.

The Chairperson: Table it, please. Page 217! Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. There is only one item on this page, 31132 - *Intangible Fixed Assets - Extensible Business Reporting Language*. We know the contract value, but can we have more details about this project, please?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for the payment to Mauritius Network Services for electronic filling of financial statement in ex-BRL format for large companies as to create a standardised format for financial reporting. The increase is mainly due to implementation of the second phase with the development of Business Intelligence Tool.

The Chairperson: Done? Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Tour, you still have one? Okay. Page 218! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister of Finance how many vacant positions there are in this department, and in particular, whether the post of Registrar of Companies has been filled?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, as for the Registrar of Companies, Mrs Chinien has been reemployed on a one-year contract basis as from 26 April 2021 and there are 23 vacancies.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 7-5 Corporate and Business Registration Department (Rs141,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4.14 p.m.)

Vote 7-6 Registrar-General's Department was called.

The Chairperson: Page 219! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 22060 – *Maintenance*, there is an increase in the amount budgeted for this year. May I know the reason why and who obtained the contract for maintenance?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, the increase in provision is due to a rise in the cost of maintenance of IT equipment following the recent expiry of the warranty period on the newly acquired server in April 2020 for the e-Registry system and also the fluctuation in the exchange rate.

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

Dr. Aumeer: Under item 22030 – *Rent*, payable by the Registrar-General Department, can we have further details on that?

Dr. Padayachy: It is for Item 22030, that's it? Mr Chairperson, it is provision made for the rental of dedicated line for smooth network connection of the Mauritius E-Registry System. The monthly rent charges amount to Rs70,000.

There is also the rental of building; provision made for the rental of office space of area 34m² at Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis, at the rate of Rs357 per square metre, and there is also the rental of one parking slot from Anwar Abbasakoor at Church Street, Port Louis, at the rate of Rs3,800 per month.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 219, last item on the page, Item 31121.801 – *Acquisition of vehicles*. Will the Minister table details regarding same?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, there is a new car that has already been acquired. I will table the details on the car.

The Chairperson: Just, out of courtesy, try to refer to the Chairperson rather Deputy Speaker at Committee Stage. Page 220! Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to page 220, Item 31132.401 – *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, may we know the name of the contractor who has been awarded this work?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, the services of an expert consultancy firm are required for the revival of the E-Registry System with restructured processes. The revamping of the system is felt to gain increased productivity and capacity to meet requirement for future years in line with the change in business environment.

For the IT Security Audit of the E-Registry System, during the past years, lots of fine tuning have been carried to different processes of the system such as an ID Security Audit exercise, which has become mandatory for the safety of the system. There has also been improvement to existing modules for the e-system. There is an implementation of an online one-stop-shop using the Info Highway; implementation of a new mode of payments under the Instant Payment Scheme being developed by the Bank of Mauritius; development of some additional reports on new schemes such as Property Development Scheme, Smart City, etc., required by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, and also enhancing the Search Online module to cater for the payment of Search Duty electronically. I will table it. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Time over! Page 221. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Finance the number of vacancies in that Department and whether the post of Registrar General has been filled.

Dr. Padayachy: Number of vacancies of what?

Mr Uteem: How many vacancies do we have in the Registrar General's Department and has the position of the Registrar General been filled?

Dr. Padayachy: The Registrar General has been filled in a temporary capacity on 17 February 2021. It is Mrs Deoyani Hurynag who has been appointed Registrar General.

The number of funded vacancies for the Registrar-General is 7.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We are done.

Vote 7-6 – Registrar – General's Department (Rs109,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: May I just give all Members an opportunity - so that you have sufficient time to turn your page. Earlier on, Mr Speaker stated that Vote 23-1 and Vote 24-1 shall be taken out of turn.

We will start with Vote 23-1.

(4.21 p.m.)

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Excuse me. Hon. Members, it is very hard for me, it is pain taking for me to be able to get it all if you talk.

Vote 23-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

The Chairperson: *C'est à la page 455.* Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 28211.024 - *Financial Support to Religious Bodies.* Can the hon. Minister of Finance table a breakdown of the allocation of funds to the various religious bodies?

Dr. Padayachy: *Vous voulez la liste.* I am going to table.

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

Mr Ramful: Item 22180 - *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials),* I can see Rs48 m. was spent. Can we have the details, the breakdown?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président,* provision is made for meeting the cost of air tickets, hotel accommodation and *per diem* as follows –

- Rs24.4 m. for overseas missions by Ministers, delegates and officials, and
- Rs5.6 m. for overseas training programmes for public officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 26 on the same page, *Grants*, for which, this year, there was a budgeted estimate of Rs57 m., but subsequent years, no more. Can I ask the hon. Minister the details about the grants for which Government is no longer going to spend onto?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président,* it is going to be paid under the Ministry of Social Security, that's why.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, concerning this Item 22120.003, Rs3 m. for *Commissions of Enquiry and Committees*, can we have some details? It can even be circulated. Which Commission of Enquiry?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of fees to Chairpersons and members in respect of Commissions of Enquiry, Fact Findings Committees, Work Permit Committees and Disciplinary and other committees.

M. le président, as at 31 May 2021, an amount of Rs0.1 m. was spent as follows –

- Rs0.05 m. in relation to the Work Permit Committees;
- Rs0.04 m. for an Enquiry on Deprivation of Mauritian Citizenship, and
- Rs0.01 m. for other committees.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Lobine, then I will go to hon. Bodha and then hon. Dr. Boolell!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 455, under Item 28217.002 – *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*. Can we have more details, please, with regard to this compensation arising out of Government Liability?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for payment, Mr Chairperson, of compensation, if any, to third parties in respect of accidents involving Government vehicles, injury or death on duty, medical negligence and court cases out of court settlements.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item, but just lower, 28217.003 - *Refund of Revenue*, we have a sum of Rs35m. which moves on to Rs65m. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as regards these sums?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision is required to refund any excess amount paid by individuals or organisations in previous financial years in connection with Land Transfer Tax, Registration Duty and License and other fees. Work permit fees are also refunded from this item to local firms in case of repatriation of foreign workers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to Item 21210.002 - *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*, of course, which is on the constant increase. Am I to understand, hon. Minister, that the whole contribution for civil servants is made by the State or has there been a cut-off point in relation to newly recruit civil servants? Do they have to make the contribution, part contribution?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision represents Government's contribution towards the *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme* for officers joining the Civil Service as

from January 2013. The Scheme is managed by SICOM and the rate of contribution based on employee's basic salary is as follows - 12% by Government and 6% by employees. There is an increase. The increase in provision caters for additional recruits in Financial Year 2021-2022. That's it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Aumeer! Then, I will come to hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28217.002- *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*. I have just heard the Minister mention it comprises medical negligence. Can we have a figure of how much has been paid?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, Rs6.2 m. for three cases of medical negligence.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are done with page 455.

Vote 23-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs2,182,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We are going to Vote 24-1.

(4.29p.m.)

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

The Chairperson: Page 456, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to Item 25210.025 – *Wage Assistance Scheme*, we provided Rs8 billion for last year and nil for the coming year. Can the hon. Minister explain to us?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, for Financial Year 2020-2021, a sum of Rs8 billion was voted for payment of Wage Assistance Scheme and Self-Employed Assistance Scheme to workers and self-employed individuals operating in the tourism sector. As at date, some Rs6.2 billion has been disbursed and some 43,000 employees in the Tourism Sector have benefitted from the scheme. And for the other sectors, I am going to table the figures afterwards. I do not have it with me.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Juman: The next financial year, till September?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision of Rs2.5 billion for the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Under Item 22120.40 – *Expert Skills Scheme*, can we know the details about this scheme?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision for Financial Year 2021-2022 has been increased as payments will have to be made to 26 experts whose services have already been retained. The services of additional experts will be required by Ministries in some areas where they have lack of skills and expertise. The priority areas where the services of experts may be procured include the following –

- (a) Infrastructure development;
- (b) Strategic planning;
- (c) Macro-fiscal Management;
- (d) Digital Economy, Green Economy or Ocean Economy;
- (e) Marshall Plan against Poverty and Social Safety Nets, and
- (f) Project Appraisal and Management Institutional Reforms and National Heritage.

Ms Ramyad: Can you table the list of the experts?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, of course.

The Chairperson: Hon Uteem! Then, I will come to hon. Bodha.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.014 - *Interim Allowance icw PRB*, I note that there is an amount of Rs1 billion budgeted for each of the coming three years. So, may I know from the hon. Minister of Finance whether it is proposed to pay PRB report in instalments? Why are we voting it in tranches?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for payment of the interim monthly allowance of Rs1000 to public officers pending the publication of the PRB Report. The Interim Allowance is being paid since 01 January 2020. It will cease to be paid once the forthcoming PRB report is effective. Any unutilised provision under this Item will be used to meet the costs associated with the report. A provision of Rs1.7 billion has been centralised under this item.

Mr Uteem: Why are we voting in tranches for PRB Report? This is what my question was.

Dr. Padayachy: It is the amount that has been provisioned.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item, but just above, 21110.010 – *Service to Mauritius Programme*, can I have the number of recruits on this programme for the year 2021 and what is the number which is expected for the next year?

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Chairperson, presently there are 230 interns including 70 laureates and one person with disability who have been posted in various Ministries and Departments.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 456, just a clarification on Item 21110.001 – *Basic Salary*. Last year it was Rs200 m., this year Rs1.7 billion.

The Chairperson: No. I have not even given you the floor yet. The time is over for this page.

Mr Ameer Meea: You can check with the Government whip.

The Chairperson: 5 minutes per page.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, it is not 5 minutes.

The Chairperson: Order! Let me sort out my business.

Ms Ramyad: For item 24-1, it has been agreed that there will be 15mins.

The Chairperson: We have agreed for item 24.1 there will be 15mins?

Ms Ramyad: Yes.

The Chairperson: Was there any kind of agreement with regards to per page 5 mins?

Ms Ramyad: Sorry?

The Chairperson: Was there any kind of agreement that it is 5 minutes per page?

Ms Ramyad: No.

The Chairperson: Fair enough, okay. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: With regards to item 25210.008 – *VAT Refund Scheme for Planters, Breeders, Fishers and Other Specific Sectors*, can the hon. Minister hand over a list of all the beneficiaries, how many beneficiaries have benefited under Planters, Breeders, Fishers?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, provision required for the refund on VAT on specific tools, machineries and equipment that are required by small planters, tea growers etc. Local artists are also eligible for VAT refund on musical instruments. As at May 2021, Rs4.3 m. has been refunded to some 207 beneficiaries. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Less noise from this side, I have to listen!

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 456, item 21110.001- *Basic Salary*, I am sure there must be an explanation because last year, Rs200 m. was budgeted, this year Rs1.7 billion and coming years, Rs3.3 billion. May we have the explanation?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, provision has been made for the implementation of the forthcoming PRB report that is expected to be published on the second semester of this year. The Report will cover around 85,000 employees in the Public Service, Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Local Authorities and parastatal bodies. The bureau is still working on the report and as such its financial implications are not known at this stage. An indicative provision of Rs1.7 billion has thus been made in this Budget. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: With regard to item 21210.004 – *Social Contributions - Contribution Social Généralisée*, I believe that the contribution with regards to Public Officers started from September last year. Why is there no mention about the contribution for last year, 2020-2021?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, provision has been made for payment of *Contribution Social Généralisée* in respect of some 85,000 public sector employees in the Civil Service as well as in public bodies that are financially dependent on Government. The rate of contribution is as follows –

- (a) 4.5% in respect of employees earning a basic wage or salary not exceeding Rs50,000 per month, and
- (b) 9% in respect of employees earning a basic wage or salary exceeding Rs50,000 per month.

As per the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* Regulation 2020, a Public Sector Employee is defined as a public officer or other employee of a Ministry or Government Department or an employee of a Local Authority, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly or a

Statutory Body or a Constituency Clerk or a Driver employed by a member of the National Assembly paid out of public funds.

Government is contributing the full amount on behalf of public sector employees as these employees were not contributing to the NPF. Ministers are the Members of Parliament and the Speaker contributes 3% of their remuneration and Government contributes 6% on their behalf. They are effective as from 01 September 2020. Thank you.

Mr Ramful: Why has it not been mentioned since September for last year?

Dr. Padayachy: But it has been paid out of public funds.

The Chairperson: Questioning a measure will...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 32 – *Acquisition of Financial Assets*, for which this year it was Rs1.9 billion and the next financial year, it is going to be a whooping of Rs5.2 billion. Can I ask why such a substantial increase?

The Chairperson: Is that the Vote Item 24.1, 15 mins? Vote 24-1, the overall that I am taking.

Dr. Padayachy: Is it for the acquisition of financial assets from Rs1.9 billion to Rs5.2 billion, that's it?

Mr Osman Mahomed: It is item 32.

Dr. Padayachy: There is the increase of some of the financial assets. I will just share some with you and table it afterwards, for example for the National Property Fund, it is from Nil in 2020-2021 to Rs2.4 billion in 2021-2022 and you will get some like this and that is why there has been this increase in the financial assets of the Government and I am going to table it of course.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: The point has already been canvassed, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Next page. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Item 25120.003 – *Financial Public Corporations - SME Development Scheme – Interest subsidy on Loans*, there is an amount of Rs25 m. which was earmarked for this current year, can I know the amount which has been disbursed so far?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, so far no amount has been disbursed. Claim from MauBank Ltd are expected by end of June 2021. We are waiting for it.

The Chairperson: Hon Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 457, item 28217.005 Other - Refund/Payment of taxes icw projetc and schemes financed by Development Partners or under Special Programmes *of which (b) Refund Scheme for recycling of PET bottles*, Rs30 m. earmarked for the coming financial year, can we have some details with regards to this item?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment to recycling companies as follows –

- Rs15 per kilo on export of used PET bottles, and
- Rs15 per kilo on local recycling on used PET bottles.

The objective of this scheme is to encourage recycling companies to increase collection rate of used plastic PET bottles for export, re-use or recycling.

As at date, Rs21 m. has been refunded for the export of 1,400 of PET bottles. *Merci.*

The Chairperson: Time over!

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs 19,652,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Just a quick reminder, it was also said that vote 25-1 shall be taken out after.

(4.46 p.m.)

Vote 25-1 Contingencies and Reserves was called.

The Chairperson: Page 459. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: I know that it is contingencies, but being given that there are a number of cases pending against the Government, Rs6 billion for contingencies. Is that an indication of what the Government expect to pay in liabilities for pending cases?

Dr. Padayachy: According to section 5 of the Finance and Audit Act, provision for a contingency shall not exceed 2% of total estimates of expenditure, excluding estimates in respect of investment projects. The provision of Rs800 m. made for Contingencies and Reserves in Financial Year 2021-2022 represents only 0.59% of the total expenditure, excluding estimates in respect of investment projects.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Regarding contingencies for this year ending June 2021, out of Rs700 m. budgeted for contingencies, may we have a list of how much has been paid and the details of it?

Dr. Padayachy: *M. le président*, I will table it. I have got a list.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. No more questions?

Vote 25-1 Contingencies and Reserves (Rs800,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We are returning back to Vote 8-1.

(4.48 p.m.)

Vote 8-1 Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities was called.

The Chairperson: Page 226. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 226, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, where an amount of Rs3.2 m. has been budgeted. May we have the details of this figure?

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, this concerns the payment of salary to four Advisers, namely: Mr K. A. Lai Kong Ling, Mr T. Moossun, Mr M. Murthoo and Mr V. Jhummon as Technical Adviser. The three previous names that I have stated, the first one is the Adviser on Information Matters, the second one is the Senior Adviser, and the third one is a Public Relations Officer. The increase is due to the recruitment of the Technical Adviser as from 26 October 2020 and refund of unutilised annual leave.

The Chairperson: Anyone on page 226? Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you. Page 227, item 26313.098 – *Utility Regulatory Authority*. Can we know the composition of the Board, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson. With regard to the Utility Regulatory Authority, we have one Chairperson and three Commissioners. The Chairperson is Mr P. Ah-Chuen, appointed on 15 May 2018, Mr P. Bacorisen, Commissioner appointed on 09 December 2020, Mr S. Narain, Commissioner whose contract was renewed on 26 February 2020 and Mrs J. Mooteealoo, Commissioner appointed on 26 February 2020.

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Merci, Mr Chairperson. A la page 227, sous l'item 26313.098 – *Utility Regulatory Authority*, est-ce qu'on peut savoir du ministre si cette autorité a émis des rapports, est intervenue, a produit quelque chose de concret depuis, parce que là, on nous demande R 17 millions en 2020, R 18 millions et R 4.8 millions ? Est-ce qu'on peut savoir ce que l'autorité a fait jusqu'ici, des rapports ?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the full operation of the URA, I understand that the following needs to be done and part of it has already been done, that is, tricking the grid record and tariff methodology. They are finalising the licensing regulations and the approval of licence fees scheduled or alternative funding arrangement. They are also reviewing and updating the electronic licensing and consumer complaint/ handling platforms to be in line with the two legislations that we have recently revised, especially the Electricity Act 2005. They are finalising and publishing the Transition Licensing Regulation and they have started a campaign of sensitisation and engagement towards the stakeholders of the electricity sector.

With regard to whether they have published a report or reports, I don't have the information right now with me, but I believe there must have been some documents published by the URA.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: In regard the same item, the Utility Regulatory Authority, at the last Committee of Supply in 2019 there was an undertaking that it will sustain itself from the collection of licensing fees and, two years later, we see that we still have to contribute for the sustainability of the fund. Can I ask the hon. Minister, since he became the Minister of Energy, what has he done to alleviate this problem out of the taxpayers' shoulders?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I believe the hon. Member participated in the amendments that we brought to the two legislations to make the URA fully operational and, like I said, we are in the process of making the URA fully operational, that's why you will

see a decrease in the funds by the year 2022 and 2023; a drastic change because by then they would be fully operational.

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

Mr Nagalingum: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item, the Minister said that there might be a report. If there is a report, can the Minister table that report?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson, if there is any report that has been published by the URA; I will definitely table the report.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Juman! Page 227!

Mr Juman: With regard to *item 22030 – Rent*, can we have a breakdown of the item?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, there has been a decrease in rental of building.

The Ministry has moved from SICOM Tower Ébène to Air Mauritius and Atchia Building in Port Louis with a monthly rental of Rs834,922 as opposed to Rs1,146,000. I have the details of the rental being paid at Medcor and Atchia Building also, but since it is a decrease, would the Member be interested in knowing the details?

The Chairperson: Would you be interested?

You do not seem to be interested in the question you are asking. Next question!

Another question on page 227? Hon. Aumeer you have one?

Mr Uteem: Bouncing back on what the hon. Minister talked about publishing reports, making reports available which have been published by the Utility Regulatory Authority, can he undertake to table the report of the URA with respect to the fixing of the price of Rs3.50 for bagasse to producers and millers?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, first of all, I need to seek advice from the URA because before I make any report public, I have to have the blessing of that independent Regulatory Authority.

The Chairperson: Page 227! Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Under the last item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, can we know the name of the company or the contractor?

Mr Lesjongard: Which item, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: The last one, 22070.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the cleaning services, I understand that the contract has been allocated to Mauriclean. The duration of the contract is from 01 July 2020 to June 2021. And with regard to cleaning services at EEMO, the contract has been allocated to Best Super Clean Co. Ltd. And the period of contract is for the same period as I stated earlier.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Page 228.

The Chairperson: Wait, we go in order. Nobody for page 227? Page 228, go on!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 26313.139 – *Extra-Budgetary Unit – Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)*. Can we know the composition of the Agency, how many times they met this financial year and why there is a decrease from Rs22,750,000 to Rs18,750,000?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, can I know the item number?

The Chairperson: Repeat the item number, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Okay, with regard to MARENA.

Mr Chairperson, the reduction is due to a decrease in GCAT funding from Rs11,750,000 to Rs4,750,000. However, Government has increased its contribution from Rs11 m. to Rs14 m.

Mr Chairperson, I understand that the reduction in the budgetary provision will not affect the operations of MARENA as external funding were met for projects that will come to an end in October 2021.

Moreover, Mr Chairperson, MARENA is applying to benefit from Green Climate funding and reduce its dependence on public financing.

With regard to administrative issues, the strategic plan of MARENA recommended a labour force of 10 employees in 2021 and this is now the case with the recruitment of 4 staff in 2021.

The Chairperson: Thank You. Hon. Mrs Karen Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.099 *Other Goods and Services – Miscellaneous Expenses (c) Awareness on Energy Efficiency*. Can we have more details about this awareness?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: Item 22900.099, on page 228.

Mr Chairperson, this item is meant for the development of new awareness raising materials which will mainly comprise posters, audio and video clips, e-brochures as well as new energy labels which will be introduced. Contract has been awarded to Digital Kites Ltd. for the sum of Rs334,000, excluding VAT.

I understand that new platforms also will be explored for awareness including social media and hence, this will reduce the provision that we have earmarked in this present budget. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you! Hon. Boolell!

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

I refer the hon. Minister to the item 26313.139 – *Extra-Budgetary Unit – Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)* that was earlier raised in connection with Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency. Now, it is an organisation that held a lot of promises but has delivered very little. I am very worried in the light of the sum being voted to keep this organisation going.

Now, I have been even told that there is a hon. Member sitting on the Board of the Energy, and we are worried because nothing much is happening. We are being called upon to vote a substantial sum and I would like to know what are the output and the outcome of this organisation, of this Agency.

The Chairperson: Hon Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: I am not worried at all, Mr Chairperson. I am very confident; I said that in my speech. MARENA has already produced the renewable energy roadmap and the hon. Member from the Opposition side sitting on that Board is very much aware of that.

Dr. Boolell: But he has expressed concern.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but that does not mean that what he has said is true.

The Chairperson: No, it is not for argument, just answer that!

Mr Lesjongard: And in terms of renewable energy development, I understand that there is a national team for emerging innovative renewable energy technologies. There were two rounds. With regard to the Round 1, two projects have been signed, that is, there are

connection agreements which have been signed. And I understand that the Mercados Consultancy Report on incentives has been finalised and the Mercados Consultative Report on funding strategies is in the process of being finalised.

I understand that there is also a study that has been completed with regard to a Floating PV farm at Tamarind Falls and this has been transferred to the CEB for implementation. And in my speech I said that at the level of the CEB they are facing some technical issues and this will be cleared in due course. With regard to the regulatory framework of renewable energy, I understand that the regulations on standards are in the process of being revised and that mechanism for accreditation will be formulated. I understand that there have been 10 awareness sessions held across the island. There has been one workshop and we have recruited a new Director, a lady; she is a very dynamic person plus new support staff so, that is why I said I am very confident, I am not worried at all.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 228, Item 22130.001 - *Studies and Project Preparation of which (a) Consultancy on Electric vehicles*, may we know who is the Consultant who has been appointed to conduct this study with regard to electric vehicles, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson. Like I said, this Item 22130.001 - *Studies and Project Preparation of which (a) Consultancy on Electric vehicles*, provides for the payment to that consultancy firm. That report was made public, it is a comprehensive study on the development of electric vehicles and we have a ten-year road map up to 2030. The contract was awarded to one Consultant by the name of EV Consult B.V of the Netherlands for a contract amount of 49,850 Euros plus VAT and the report was amended to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on that road map and the final report was submitted in May 2020.

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

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer to the Item just underneath 22130.001 - *Studies and Project Preparation of which (b) Development of guidelines for energy efficiency and energy conservation (i) Hotels (ii) Industries & SMEs (iii) Commercial sector*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this study has already been launched?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, with regard to that Item 22130.001 - *Studies and Project Preparation of which (b) Development of guidelines for energy efficiency and energy conservation*, three sectors were concerned, the Hotel Industry sector, the Industries & SMEs and the Commercial sector. I understand for the hotel industry the contract has been completed, the guidelines have been produced, payment has already been effected and the guidelines will be disseminated to hotels for implementation.

With regard to the industrial sector and SMEs, the development of the guidelines for the industries will be outsourced to a consultancy firm as it requires considerable expertise which is not available in-house. Bids launched during Financial Year 2020 and 2021 could not be awarded given that price quoted exceeded the estimated cost for the project. The bids will be relaunched during Financial Year 2021-2022 and EEMO will develop guidelines for energy conservation and energy efficiency for SMEs in the form of best practices in-house.

With regard to the commercial sector, I understand, Mr Chairperson that energy consumption in the commercial sector has been increasing steadily in the past years with an increase of 5% in 2019 as compared to 2018. Also, more than 75% of the energy consumed in the commercial sector is from electricity. So, guidelines for energy conservation and energy efficiency need to be developed, disseminated to operators and promoters in the commercial sector. In this case, the development of guidelines for the commercial sector will be outsourced to a consultancy firm having expertise in the sector. This is why funds have been earmarked in this year's budget for industries and SMEs and the commercial sector. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: A l'item 28223.010 - *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme*. Dans cette liste de *Pipe Replacement Programme* à la hauteur de R 491 millions, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire pourquoi nous n'avons pas de *Pipe Replacement Programme* dans les circonscriptions numéro 15 et 16 où il y a pas mal de problèmes d'eau ?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, we have a programme and we are going as per the programme. Wherever there are pipes to be replaced in view to alleviate the problems of consumers in a particular area, we will do the needful. I do not have the full programme with me, I have what has been provided in this year's budget but I will check. But I am sure that there will be pipe laying works or renewal of pipes in constituency numbers 15 and 16.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister! We are all at page 229 right now? Thank you very much. Hon. Uteem?

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28223.010 - *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme*, may I know from the hon. Minister, out of the Rs346 m. budgeted last year, how much has been spent to date for the replacement of pipes?

Mr Lesjongard: Which Item is the hon. Member referring to, please?

Mr Uteem: Item 28223.010 - *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme*. The capital expenditure, last year there was a budgeted amount of Rs354 m. for pipe replacement, I just want to know how much of that sum has been actually spent in pipe replacement.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, we have the information per project but if it is for the total amount for all the projects, I would request the hon. Member whether I can table the information. Thank you.

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

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 229, Item 28223.010 - *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme (b) Pierrefonds*, can we have details, please about Item 28223.010 - *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme (b) Pierrefonds (i) South-West Coast - Phase II* and on the next page, (l) *Chamouny and Chemin Grenier* and (m) *Flic en Flac*?

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that the Pierrefonds project is being implemented under two contracts as follows, that is, LEG 1A from Pierrefonds system to La Chaumière to New Bosquet Reservoir and associated works. The implementation of the project, I understand, has been delayed due to way leave issues and rehabilitation works expected at La Ferme. Bids are being finalised and tenders are expected to be launched in August 2021.

With regard to LEG 3, that is from Pierrefonds system, Coromandel, Gros Cailloux and Canot regions, works were completed in March 2020. Concerning Chamouny and Chemin Grenier, Flic en Flac and l'Escalier, I understand that tender documents are ready and expected to be launched by end of July 2021. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bhagwan: *Thank you. I will take very short on this item, same item 28223.010 – Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme, the budget, 346 millions pour l'année écoulée et 389 près de 390 millions. Est-ce que je peux demander à l'honorable ministre s'il est satisfait de la qualité du travail, de nous faire circuler une liste des contracteurs qui ont été pris, je prends dans la circonscription Canot, Gros Cailloux, la qualité des travaux laisse à désirer. Je ne vais pas parler sur ça, sûrement mes collègues vont en parler, la qualité des travaux, est-ce qu'il y a des contracteurs qui ont été sanctionnés ; est-ce qu'il y a eu des *retention money* qui ont été retenus ? Le ministre doit nous dire, sur 346, est-ce que dans l'argent qui est prévu pour l'année prochaine, l'année financière, il y a suffisamment d'argent pour refaire les routes où il y a eu le *pipe replacement* ?*

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the quality of work on a site depends on the contractor, but also on the supervision carried out by the client. I had replied to several PQs in Parliament, giving my views with regard to certain projects that were awarded to certain contractors, especially for renewal of pipe and pipe lane. I can reassure the hon. Member that we have taken the necessary steps with regard to, first of all to the specification regarding those tenders and also with regard to supervision of the works on site so that we have value for money and also we have works of good quality. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22090 – *Security*.

Page 229, item 22090 – *Security*, there is an increase from Rs4.3 million to Rs9 million for current year and the next years, can the hon. Minister informed the House as to the scope of works, whether it has been increased and who are the contractors who have got the contract? Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, may I reply?

The Chairperson: Yes, please.

Mr Lesjongard: This item caters for security provision that is for security services at Midlands, Mare aux Vacoas, La Ferme Dam, and Hydrology Sub-Office in Rose-Hill. A new

contract has been awarded to RSL Security Limited to the sum of Rs8,938,592.16 on 16 June 2021. The provision has increased due to minimum wages in force on October 2019 as per Government Notice No. 223 of 2019, thus an increase in the budget value. I understand that Rs4.3 m. was budgeted based on last contract which was awarded in September 2018 and in view with the increase that I have stated, the sum has increased to the amount that has been earmarked in this Budget.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: With regard to item 28222.014 – *Transfer to Households - Water Tank Grant Scheme*, can we know the number of applications with regard to water tank and the number of beneficiaries as well as the list of contractors who have been retained for the provision of these water tanks?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand that provision is made for the operation and management of the Water Tank Grant Scheme and this is done both at the level of the Ministry and the CWA. Now, the scheme provides for a grant of Rs8,000 to families with a total household income of Rs50,000 for the purchase of water tanks and the maximum grant is Rs5,000 for the water tank and Rs3,000 for a pump. The number of applications approved was 10,742 for water tanks and 10,709 for water pumps. The amount disbursed as at 21 June was Rs83,251,000 out of Rs100,000,000 comprising of Rs52,285,000 for water tanks and Rs30,966,000 for pumps. I understand that the registered list of manufacturers of water tanks and water pumps are as follows –

Four suppliers are registered for the water tanks –

- (i) Duraco Ltd;
- (ii) Resiglas Co. Ltd;
- (iii) Sun Industries, and
- (iv) Surfrider Co. Ltd.

And the five suppliers registered for domestic water pumps are as follows –

- (i) Resiglas Co. Ltd;
- (ii) Samech Co. Ltd;
- (iii) Duraco Ltd;

- (iv) Sun Industries, and
- (v) Jayson Network Ltd.

I understand also that the registration of the contractors is carried out through an open advertisement. Since the introduction of the scheme in 2011, a total of 81,366 households have benefited from the scheme. As at date, 18,442 households have benefited from a domestic water pump since the scheme was introduced in July 2019. So, the total amount disbursed is Rs361,762,423 and Rs271,354,193 that is from 2015 to date. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha, page 229? Did you ask? Hon. Ms J. Bérenger, then?

Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, of which we have seen that the fees have increased considerably from Rs372,000 to Rs2.2 million, can we have more details?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand that the provision that we have made in this year's Budget, the allocation is as follows –

- (i) Fees to Chairman and members of the Bid Committee - Rs150,000;
- (ii) Consultancy for the drafting of a Water Bill - Rs2 million;
- (iii) Refund of subscription fees to professional bodies - Rs22,000, and
- (iv) Fees for training - Rs50,000.

I understand that an amount of Rs178,900 has been spent during the Financial Year 2020-2021. The Consultant that I have stated will be recruited to review legislation for Water Sector and come up with a Water Bill as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, hon. Minister. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: À l'item 22130 .005 – *Studies and Surveys - Studies on Water Resources and Development*, je voudrai savoir simplement du ministre si il y a un rapport, un *study* qui peut être déposé sur la table de l'Assemblée nationale ?

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

Mr Lesjongard: Studies on Water Resources and Development, you are referring to all the five items or to a specific item?

Mr Assirvaden: Les R 24 millions.

Mr Lesjongard: Okay, I will have to check because the studies are with regard to five items as stated there; upgrading of La Nicolière, Dam Break reservoir, pollution, geo-technical investigation. Normally, these reports are not submitted. Let me check with the Authority concerned, and then, I will revert back to the House, Mr Chairperson.

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

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 229, item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultant - Review of Legislation for Water Sector*. The hon. Minister provided some details. May I know whether with regard to the review of the legislation, there will be a law firm that will be appointed, or lawyers, or it is just a general consultancy firm?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, please.

Mr Lesjongard: Let me get the information, Mr Chairperson - what will be the course of action that we will follow.

The Chairperson: You can give it later to the House. Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 229, under *item 28223.010 - Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme*. There are two lines that I would like to have some information; Plaine Verte, Rs14 m. was budgeted and Cité Roche Bois, Rs26 m., both in my Constituency, No. 3. I would like to know how much have been used out of both figures that have been budgeted and how many meters of pipes have been replaced.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I understand that the provision was made to finance 8.2 km of pipe replacement works at Roche Bois and Plaine Verte. The contract was awarded to Onix Co. Ltd. As at to date, I understand that 65% of the works only have been completed. I understand there is a delay in the completion of the contract and that the LD has already been applied. I understand that the delays were due to adverse weather conditions, lockdown due to COVID, but also due to the poor performance of the contractor. I understand that, as at June 2021, the contractor has already been paid an amount of Rs82.6 m. and I understand that no payment was made in 2020-2021.

With regard to Cité Roche Bois, I understand that works have been completed; the contract was awarded to Sotravic Limitée and an amount of Rs57.6 m. has been paid on 15

June. Now, I understand that there is another issue with regard to that contract, that is, there is part of the works which were in the contract, but which have been omitted because the contractor or the client has not received the way leave up to now from the RDA to cross the M2 Motorway.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I come back to the Water Bill? I understand that we will proceed through an open advertisement, that is, the recruitment will be for a consultant having experience more specifically in the water sector.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Last two questions. Hon. Osman Mahomed, if you are not concentrated, I will take hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Sorry?

The Chairperson: I was giving you a chance. Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: On page 229, can the hon. Minister give us more information about item 22130.005 *Studies on Water Resources and Development, (e) FEXTE Eau- Water Observatory (AFD Funded)*, which I guess is funded by *Agence Française de Développement*? Can we have more details about FEXTE Eau- Water Observatory?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, in September 2019, *l'Agence Française de Développement* signed an agreement with my Ministry, the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues and the Office *de l'Eau (OLE)* of Réunion Island for the setting up of water observatories in Mauritius and Rodrigues under the FEXTE Programme, with the main objective to set up a comprehensive information database on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the water sector to allow for the formulation of the most appropriate policy.

AFD is providing a grant of 250,000 Euros for this project, which is planned to be completed in February 2022. Consultant XTM has been appointed in March 2021 to develop the observatory platform for Mauritius. As at date, a skeleton of the platform has been developed and a mission is planned to Mauritius in October 2021 for fine-tuning the same. The platform will be ready for use in February 2022 and, as at today, an amount of 108,000 Euros have already been spent on that project.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We will take a last question from hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Which page?

The Chairperson: Whichever page you want.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 229 or 230?

The Chairperson: Whichever you want.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 230. So, item 31113.002 - *Construction of Dams - Rivière des Anguilles*. The total budgeted sum for here is Rs7.885 billion, whereas in the Budget Speech, it is mentioned that it is estimated at Rs9.4 billion. Can I ask the hon. Minister why the difference in these two figures?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, would you be able to answer?

Mr Lesjongard: Like I said in my intervention, the project amount that has been put in the Budget and the amount I have stated in my speech, concerns not only the dam but also land acquisition, a water treatment plant, the realignment of the road and consultancy services. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We passed the time allocated by the Whips by four minutes.

Vote 8-1 Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (Rs3,310,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.34 p.m.)

The Chairperson: We will break for 30 minutes. I would like the Whip of Opposition and Government Whip to come and see me in my Chambers.

At 5.34 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.21 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Please be seated! I am sorry for the delay. I had to sort out matters with the Whips.

(6.21 p.m.)

Vote 9-1 Social Integration was called.

The Chairperson: Item 9-1. Any question? Item 9-2!

Mr Uteem: Item 9-1 please.

The Chairperson: Yes. Page?

Mr Uteem: 241

The Chairperson: Page 241. Item number?

Mr Uteem: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys - National Database on Vulnerable Groups*, may I know from the hon. Minister who conducted those surveys?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well to capture vulnerable groups, a survey was carried out by Mr Bundhoo, Consultant.

The Chairperson: Hon. Karen Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo-Kune-Bacha: Under item 27210.014 – *Social Assistance Benefits- Poverty and Empowerment for Child Allowance and School Materials*, there has been a decrease. Can we know why?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The decrease depends on the trend. There has been a decrease because for the present year, we have not been able to spend the whole amount. It depends on the applications received.

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

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.135 (d) – *Other Programs*, can we have more details about which program is under this item?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Other programmes for example training in jewellery making, pickles making and advanced pastry. Then we have also medical screening, unveiling talents and recreational activities for the youth.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub! No. Sorry. Hon. Dhunoo! I will keep on ...

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.014 - *Social Assistance Benefits - Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty) (a) Empowerment Support Scheme*, can we have more details on this scheme?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Empowerment Support Scheme*, it is the subsistence allowance given to beneficiaries under the SRM - financial support.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys - National Database on Vulnerable Groups*, est-ce que la ministre pourrait nous indiquer à ce jour, combien de personnes tombent sous le Registre Social ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For the year 2020-2021, there were around 9000 beneficiaries. We have had a recertification exercise done recently. So, we have presently around 5197. Many of them have come out of the system.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 - *Fees*, there is a decrease. Can we know why and can we have a breakdown of those fees, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 221...?

The Chairperson: ...120 – Fees.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.

The Chairperson: Page 241.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Can you say it again? It is Item 22...

The Chairperson: 120.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Fees then.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Can we have a breakdown and can we know why there is a decrease?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Last year, we had a Consultant on poverty alleviation and his contract has ended now. That is why there is a decrease because for the time being we do not need a Consultant. If need be, then we will ask for funding from the Minister of Finance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: Page 242, under the Item 26323.135 (i) - *Construction of Social Housing Units*.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 242?

Ms Ramyad: Yes, because we are taking under sub-groups now. Item 26323.135 (i) - *Construction of Social Housing Units* Rs50 m., can we know the breakdown, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Social Housing for vulnerable groups. Up to now, we have constructed 191 houses.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. May I just clarify one thing? Has the Whip already informed all the Members as to how we are proceeding? It is informed, hon. Armance?

Mr Armance: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. So, we are taking item by item and each item has been allocated a certain amount of time. You should have discussed it with your Whips. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 241, Item 26313.135 (d) – *Other Programmes* for the National Empowerment Foundation, may we have the details of what those other programmes are?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Other programmes are training of beneficiaries, medical screening, unveiling talents for the Youth and also some recreational activities for our beneficiaries.

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

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 241, Item 26313.135 (a) – *Operating Costs*, can we have a breakdown with regard to this item, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision made to meet the operating cost of the National Empowerment Foundation in Mauritius and Rodrigues, including salaries and allowances, cost of utilities, maintenance of equipment etc.

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

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. As regards Item 27210.014 (a) – *Empowerment Support Scheme*, can I ask the hon. Minister, how many families are being granted social aid under this scheme?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: There is no social aid under this scheme. This is for the empowerment of our beneficiaries falling under the SRM. So, social aid is something different, social aid is under the Social Security Division.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister how many families are under this SRM list?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: On the SRM?

Mr Bodha: Yes.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: As I have said earlier, there were 9000 beneficiaries. There has been a recertification exercise, we have presently 5197 beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Can I request all Members while requesting for information from the Minister, first of all, give the page number and Item number? That will make the task of the Minister easier. Thank you very much. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Page 241, Item 27210.014 (iii) – *School Materials*. In fact, I have got many representations in my Constituency from parents that they usually get school materials for their children but recently, they are not having these school materials anymore.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, I find it strange because this is a regular exercise carried out every year. So, the exercise is ongoing. For this year, the distribution of the school materials is scheduled to start as from the first week of July. But as the hon. Member already knows, the beneficiaries should be on the SRM list, otherwise, they will not benefit from this particular scheme.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. Hon. Quirin! Then, I will go to hon. Doolub, hon. Armance and hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 242, Item 26323.135 (i) – *Construction of Social Housing Units*, can we know from the hon. Minister if the location has already been identified for the construction of these housing units?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes. For this year, 9 houses have already been completed. 79 houses, constructions are ongoing and we have also launched a first batch of 20 houses to be constructed.

Let me just check with my officers for the location. Yes, I have it here, Port Louis, Pamplemousses, Savanne, Black River, Moka, Plaine Wilhems, Rivière du Rempart, Flacq and Grand Port.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 241, Item 27210.014 (iv) – *S.C and H.S.C Examination Fees (Second Time & First Time Failures)*, may we know from the Minister how many students have benefitted from this scheme? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It is Tertiary Education because for this year, we have not catered for S.C, H.S.C and Grade 9 because the exams have been rescheduled due to COVID-19. So, for this year, 18 students benefitted at Tertiary Education level.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon, Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you. On page 241, Item 27210.014 (iii) – *School Materials*, I can see there was a budget of Rs65 m. I just want to find out how much has been spent out of the Rs65 m. and what is the tender procedure for allocating the contract to provide for the school materials?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Out of the Rs65 m., Rs38 m. has been spent and we have catered for 17,177 students. Well, with regard to the procurement exercise, I will have to check with my officers if they can give me the information. Can you put your question again, please?

The Chairperson: Repeat your question, please?

Mr Armance: I would like to find out what are the tender procedures?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For this year?

Mr Armance: For school materials only.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For this year?

Mr Armance: For the previous year, 2020-2021.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, procurement procedures, I suppose are the same for all items bought by Government. So, I think, it is open advertised bidding.

Mr Armance: Internal?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Let me see if the officers have the information. It is not subject to PPA.

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

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 241, Item 26313.135 (b) - *Upgrading of living environment in deprived regions*, may we have a list from the hon. Minister about which regions have been earmarked?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:

(a) Setting up of an open gym at Black River;

- (b) Setting up of a learning corner at Black River, Plaine Wilhems;
- (c) Refurbishment of children's playground at Grand Port;
- (d) Setting up of Children's playground at Grand Bois;
- (e) children's playground at Camp Diable and Tranquebar;
- (f) fencing and gates of Jean Blaise learning corner, Pointe aux Sables;
- (g) Mini open-gym, Riche Mare;
- (h) children's playground in Bonne Veine, Quartier Militaire, and
- (i) setting up of a learning corner at Plaisance.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Item 9-1, Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 241, item 26313.135 – Extra Budgetary Units - National Empowerment Foundation (c) *TVET Training & Placement*, can I ask the hon. Minister how many beneficiaries were placed on this training and placement programme?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 1,542 beneficiaries have followed training, 1,163 in Mauritius and 379 in Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Last question on item 9-1. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: On the same item, Mr Chairperson, I can see that the budget has been decreased, may we know why are you decreasing the budget for training and placement?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It depends on the number of beneficiaries, now that a recertification exercise has been done and we have less beneficiaries on the list, so that is why the fund has been decreased.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. We are done with item 9-1.

Vote 9-1 Social Integration (Rs668,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.38 p.m.)

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity was called.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Which page?

The Chairperson: In fact we are going by item. Yes, hon. Uteem?

Mr Uteem: I am on page ...

The Chairperson: Page 244. *Donnez-moi une seconde!* Page 244 until 250.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, page 244.

Mr Uteem: Page 245, item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, Rs150 m. earmarked. Can we have a list of the doctors who have been paid and the amount that they have been paid for attending medical boards and domiciliary visits? You may table the list.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, no issue. I will table it in the next sitting.

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

Dr. Boolell: Item 22140 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, with an increase throughout the estimates year, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to whether there is tender call for supply of medical drugs and equipment and when was the last tender exercise conducted and whether there is transparency in respect of the amount earmarked to fund this item?

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Minister!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: You are talking of item 22140?

The Chairperson: That is correct.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision of Rs43.4 m. made for the purchase of 150,000 doses of influenza vaccines to be used for elderly persons aged 60 and above, inmates of charitable institutions, licensed home and SEN schools. The tender exercise done by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 246, item 31132.116 - Intangible Fixed Assets - E-Social Security System, can I have some details on the E-Social Security System on this project?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The existing system dates back to 25 years. So, we are working on an E-Social Security System. In view of the complexity of the project, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has recommended to enlist the services of an Independent Consultant.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Fabrice David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 246, item 27210.002 – Social Aid of which Assistance to Professional Fishermen, I can see that there was a budget of Rs106 m. budgeted for last year, may I now from the hon. Minister, how many fisherman benefited from this assistance and what was the means of this disbursement to the fishermen? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It is the bad weathers allowance and close seasons allowance payable by Ministry Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping. If you do not mind when he will intervene, you can put the question to him.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 246. Item 28212.013 – *Transfers to Households of which Gifts to Centenarians*, can we know how many centenarians are registered with your Ministry and whether the Ministry is contemplating to review the gifts given to centenarians. We have received complaints as MPs from them. They are not happy with the medal or the telephone. If ever there has been a thinking of the Ministry for the coming years or coming months to review the type of gifts which are given, which should be practical.

They have been given gift sometimes they cannot use. This is what other MP's also have received these complaints.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I think it will be good if the hon. Member can just say to the House which gift up to now has not been useful?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We give one centenarian medal, one certificate, one gift up to the sum of Rs5,000 to be chosen by the centenarian, one cheque of Rs21,836, one telephone - this is a gift from the Mauritius Telecom and then we have a cash gift of Rs10,000 from the National Solidarity Fund and then Rs1,000 from the Senior Citizen Council. So, a lot of money!

Mr Bhagwan: It is not a question of money. Getting excited.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Hon. Member, I am not excited, I am just explaining to you that we are giving gifts in cash, not items. It is, I think, to the benefit of the centenarians to buy what the things he or she wants.

The Chairperson: I am clear with your answer. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you. Page 247.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Page 247, yes.

Mr Juman: Item *27210.101 – Social Assistance Benefits in Cash of which Basic Retirement Pension*, can I know if there has been any provision for the increase in the basic pension rate for the coming year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Decision has been taken to increase it to Rs9,000, so up to now it is Rs9,000 per month.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. Hon. Nuckcheddy!

Mr Nuckcheddy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 246, item *31111.012 – Dwellings – Construction of Homes for the Elderly*, can the Minister provide some more details on the Rs100 m. earmarked for this project?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision made for the construction of two homes for the elderly at Flic en Flac and Palmar. We are at the level of Procurement.

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

Mr Armance: On page 246, item *26313.093 – Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*, where I can see Rs12 m. voted. Can we have the names of the Board members, the Chairperson, Managers and all allocations and fees paid to them?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I will table the document.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 246, item *27210.017 – Assistance and Training of Disabled Persons*. Can the hon. Minister tell us the number of persons benefiting from this assistance and also how many disabled persons are currently being employed?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, last year we carried out an exercise for the updating of our Register for Persons with Disabilities. We have also updated our Register of

Employers. We currently have 1,118 persons with disabilities on the register. MITD has trained some 20 in 2020; Alpha Cleaning around, 13 in this year. Well, it all depends on the willingness of the beneficiaries also. If they want to be trained they need to let us know. Very often, we write letters to them, but they don't answer. So, it is very difficult for us. But I must say also that this year, I have had several meetings with the private sector regarding training and employment of persons with disabilities and I do hope that we will get help from the private sector to train persons with disabilities.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Armance! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 246, item 27210.017 – *Social Aid for Assistive Devices*. May we know from the hon. Minister what the assistive devices are and whether eligibility to get these means tested?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Assistive devices: hearing aids, wheelchairs, dentures, spectacles; but I must say that this year we have changed the policy from assistance in kind to assistance in cash because we were having difficulty to get those items, so we have changed. A Press communiqué informing the public about the change in policy has already been done and we have informed our beneficiaries to contact their nearest Social Security Office to apply, if need be.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you. Page 246, item 31111.002 – *Construction of Recreational Centre at Riambel*. Can we know the completion date for this project?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The status?

Mr Ramful: Yes, the status.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Good news! The construction has been completed, finally and we are in the process of *meubler* the centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Page 245, item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Can we have more details about the fees for Medical Board and also how many domiciliary visits have been paid for the last financial year? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We have 26,000 beneficiaries and our doctors effect visits to all of them.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Page 245, item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Le fait que nous avons pas mal de plaintes des gens de la circonscription concernant le *Medical Board*, peut-on savoir si les médecins qui sont sur le *Board* sont des médecins de l'*Establishment*, du privé, s'ils sont sur contrat, et comment on constitue ce *Board* avec les médecins ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: They are on contract. So, they are not specialists. If someone is not satisfied, if his application has been disallowed, he can make an appeal and the appeal is being heard by two specialists. Well, I can say that the number of appeals allowed is very few compared to the number of appeals disallowed.

Mr Assirvaden: They are on contract?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: They are on contract.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 246, item 27210.017 – *Social Aid for Assistive Devices*, Rs35 m. for this year, for which you said that cash would be granted. Can I know for wheelchair beneficiaries, how much a beneficiary would be granted for him/her to buy a wheelchair?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: A maximum of Rs5,000 for the wheelchair. So, if the person wants to get one of better quality, he can top up on the amount of Rs5,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: It is a pleasure.

Ms Anquetil: Page 246, item 31111.012 – *Construction of Homes for the Elderly*. In regard to tender process, can the hon. Minister say where matters stand?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, I have been informed that constructions are at the level of procurement. If the hon. Member wants more information, I can check with my Officers if they have more details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo! After him, I would like Members to catch my eyes!

Mr Dhunoo: Page 246, *item 27220.001 - Social Aid*, where Rs25 m. was earmarked last year. May we know why there has been no budget for this year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It is because provision for payment of assistive devices is now made under another item, the Social Aid for Assistive Devices.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Chairperson, if I may answer to the query of the previous hon. Member, geotechnical investigations are ongoing.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Under item *.402 – Upgrading of Recreational Centres*, can we know which recreational centres are we talking about and if this is an ongoing project? When will it be completed?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Thank you, hon. Member for your question. So, it is the –

- James Burty David Recreation Centre: replacement of floor tiles, replacement of fire fighting pumps (the works have already started) and replacement of sewerage pump;
- Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Recreational Centre, same thing: replacement of floor tiles of the dining, reception, administration areas, and
- Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Recreational Centre: provision for new water tanks and water pumps to be replaced.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item *22120.001 – Fees – Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Can we know what is the number of medical practitioners who are involved – the pool of doctors – and whether there are specialists in that? *Et quel est le rythme des* domiciliary visits? Is it monthly, every 2 months? May we know from the hon. Minister?

The Chairperson: You got the question?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We have presently 258 – if my memory serves me right – medical practitioners working on sessional basis attached to the Ministry. And your other question was about?

Well, if you are talking about Medical Board...

Mr Bhagwan: *Non, les visites à domicile.*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Les visites à domicile; chaque mois une visite!*

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister! Hon. Assirvaden, you win my eyes from the back!

Mr Assirvaden: Je suis à la page 245.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Vous retournez à la page 245 ?

Mr Assirvaden: Un renseignement Madame, concernant l'item *22120.001 – Fees – Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Est-ce que j'ai bien compris que les médecins qui sont sur contrat sur ce *Board* sont payés par, je veux dire...

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Par session.

Mr Assirvaden: Par session! Donc si les médecins font trainer les sessions, ils ont plus?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Oui! Mais* that is why...

(Interruptions)

That is a very good question! That is why, for transparency, to be fair, we have recruited more doctors. In the past, there were only 58 doctors, now we have a pool of 258.

Mr Assirvaden: Parce qu'on n'a pas mal de plaintes! Les gens de la circonscription vous disent que les médecins vous font trainer de semaine en semaine, de session en session. Donc, les médecins gagnent au même moment!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I am not of your opinion, unfortunately.

The Chairperson: No, no, no! We are not going on policy matters right now! Go on figures! Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 247, item *27210.301 – Social Assistance Benefit in Cash – Assistance to Ex-Servicemen*.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes?

Mr Léopold: Can I know how many ex-servicemen we have and what type of assistance is given to them?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, previously this item was under the Ministry of Finance. Let me check, I do not have the information here. 900!

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 247, again, concerning domiciliary visits, item 22120.001 – *Fees – Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Can we know from the hon. Minister what is the allowance paid per visit to the medical practitioner?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Rs1,155, Medical Board *et si c'est* home visit Rs610. So, do not ask me why it is less than the Medical Board, I do not have the answer.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your clarity, hon. Minister! Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes.

The Chairperson: You are having a second question already! You are going home! Go on!

Mr Osman Mahomed: You are very generous to me today. Thank you!

The Chairperson: I am always generous! We are always generous on this side!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Coming back to where my colleague, hon. Assirvaden, left on page 245 item 22120.001 – *Fees – Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Fees for medical board, Rs150 m, every year for doctors on contract. Being given the malaise raised by my colleague, does it not make sense for the Ministry to recruit full-time doctors to do specifically this job so that the beneficiaries – just a suggestion for you to consider – do not have to go to and fro because the doctors they go into that vicious circle and the doctors keep claiming and in the process they face hardship?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Maybe if it were like in the past, where we were having 58 doctors, I would have understood. As I have said, the situation has changed now. We have recruited 258, can you imagine? I am not talking of 58, so, maybe we have 1 or 2 complaints but I will take note of your suggestions and we will see.

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

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 247 item 27210.101 *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash – Basic Retirement Pension*. Given that we have an ageing workforce, now, I would like to know whether the pension of Rs9,000 per pensioner, will that be maintained or when we reach 2023 whether there will be an incremental increase?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I can speak today! So, currently the monthly basic retirement pension stands at Rs9,000. So, what will it be in 2023, for the time being it is very difficult to answer that.

Dr. Boolell: So, there is no certainty at all.

The Chairperson: In any event, that would amount to policy

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: But the hon. Member will appreciate that this pension has considerably increased over the years since 2014. In 2014, the basic retirement pension was only Rs3,623. So, there has been considerable increase since 2014.

Dr. Boolell: May I have the number of beneficiaries?

The Chairperson: The number of beneficiaries, will you give it to him?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Number of beneficiaries: 253,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much! Last question from hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: In relation to the same item 27210.104 – *Special Assistance Benefits in Cash – Basic Orphans Pension*, I see there is a substantial increase with regard to Basic Orphans Pension. Can I have the number of beneficiaries for orphans' pension?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 335 beneficiaries! And here also I must say that the Orphans pension has been increased from Rs5,000 to Rs8,000 for children not attending schools under the age of 16 years.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, hon. Minister!

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity (Rs38,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.04 p.m.)

Vote 10-1 Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives was called.

The Chairperson: Let me just clarify something before continuing. I have just indicated by the Whips that rather than going through the whole Vote of 10, we will go 10-1, 10-101, 10-102 and there is some amount of time that shall be apportioned.

So, let us start with 10-1 general which is on pages 255 and 256 half way. That is all that we shall be taking under this item.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 256, Item 31132.117 - *Development of a Centralised IT System*, may I know from the hon. Minister what is this system about and whether contract has already been allotted for this project?

Mr Bholah: It is being said that data for SMEs especially are presently fragmented and disparate, coming from different sources. So, we want to have a centralised system where it is connected to the other sources as well so that we can get it in real time and the tender has not been launched up to now.

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

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 256, Item 22030 – *Rent*, in fact, there are two items 22030 and 22020. Same item, *Rent*, one is Rs8.6 m. and one is Rs13 m., may we have the details and the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Bholah: Yes, one is for general, this is for the Newton Tower, I can circulate it and the other one is for industrial development which is found at Medcor Building, the building that houses Air Mauritius Quarters as well.

Ms Ramyad: Mr Chairperson, on a point of clarification. We are doing by Sub-Heads so that the Minister can find himself in his notes. So, please, do follow the principle.

The Chairperson: I think that was made quite clear by me. Let us take hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, page 256, Item 31122.802 – *Other Machinery & Equipment Acquisition of IT Equipment*, can we know from the hon. Minister the list of IT equipment bought and who was allocated the contract?

Mr Bholah: No, the contract has not been allocated. What we want with the concept of work from home is to give each and every individual laptops and other logistics in the event they have to work from home in the future. So, they are better equipped than they are now.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. You have done Minister?

Mr Bholah: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 257 under Item 26313.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*.

The Chairperson: No! No!

Mr Lobine: It is under *Sub-Head 10-102*, it is found on page 257, we are on page 257.

The Chairperson: Let me just clarify anew to everybody and for those who are not here, do share the information with your colleagues. I am taking Item 10 and each Sub-Heading at a time. So, what is clear is page 255 and halfway of page 256. Okay? Let me from now onward see hands raised. Who has any question? No questions. I move to next item. Now I am moving to page 256 until half way 257 *Sub-Head 10-102: Industrial Development*.

Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 257 26313.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*, we are being asked to vote Rs11 m. and the budget for the past year is Rs31.3 m. Can we know the Board of the Mauritius Standards Bureau composed of whom?

Mr Bholah: The composition?

Mr Bhagwan: No, I am not finished, Mr Chairperson, one minute please.

Mr Bholah: Do not get excited, you have the liberty to ask whatever question you want.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order! Order!

Mr Bholah: Avail yourself of the liberty to put any question you want.

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki lin dir la?*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pan konpran.*

The Chairperson: Get on with the question!

Mr Bhagwan: The Board of the Mauritius Standards Bureau is composed of whom? Who is the Chairperson, the members and also who is the Director General or General Manager of the Mauritius Standards Bureau and what is the monthly pay packet as budgeted for this person?

Mr Bholah: For the last question, the answer is that it is Mrs Boygah who is the General Manager and her terms and conditions are as per the PRB report whereas...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Wait, let the Minister answer. Let him answer.

Mr Bholah: It is as per the PRB report. With regard to the Board composition, I will table it.

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

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 257, Item 22130 – *Studies & Surveys*, I can see that last year there was Rs2 m. budgeted and as from this year nothing is earmarked. May I know from the hon. Minister to what those Rs2 m. was related to?

Mr Bholah: Yes, you are right, hon. David. In fact, for this year, we have not provided for any amount and we do not intend to have any survey or whatever study and for last year Rs2 m. was spent. It was a study on the Mauritius Textile and Apparel Industry and this was sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission. There were local consultants who were appointed and the report was launched in December last.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. I will take hon. Eshan Juman, hon. Dhunoo then hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger. If we have time, we will come to you.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can the hon. Minister tell us the details and breakdown of the figures and also why is there a reduction compared to last year?

Mr Bholah: Well, these are fees which are normally paid to Board Members for the Bid Committee and Bid Evaluation Committee, fees to assessors and consultants of Mauritas, fees for training, refund for subscription fees for professional bodies and decrease in provision is based on actual trend. So, they have adjusted figures for 2021-2022 based on the figures that we have spent for 2020-2021.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 257, under Capital Expenditure, Item 26323.011 – *Fashion and Design Institute*, Rs18.9 m. were earmarked last year; there has been a decrease to Rs15 m. Can the Minister give more details?

Mr Bholah: The FDI will invest more in hardware and software and also they are going to set up a Jewellery Unit for training purposes and it costs money.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger, if I have time, I will come to you.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Page 256, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have more details about the Extra Assistance, please?

Mr Bholah: This is provision made for payment of allowances, travelling, annual leaves and bonus to one Senior Advisor in the industry division.

The Chairperson: We just managed to get you at the end of time. We will give hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie one.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 257, Item 26323.011 – *Fashion & Design Institute*, I would like to know the name of the person at the head of the Institute and his/her qualifications. Secondly, under the same item 26323.064 – *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*, whether the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council has produced any report and if yes, will the hon. Minister table the report? Thank you.

Mr Bholah: For the first question, FDI is headed by a Director and it is Dr. Mrs Iranah. As far as I know, she holds a Ph. D. in Textile Technology. The second question about NPCC, there are a number of reports, of course, I can table at a later stage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you. Item 26313.064 – *Extra Budgetary Units - National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*, can we have details of the Council and the names of the members, allowance and fringe benefit fees paid to them? And I would like to find out how many times have the Council met during this current Financial Year?

Mr Bholah: Yes, the Council, I can circulate and how many times, presently I do not have this reply as to how many times they have sat.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We shall move to the next item, hon. Minister. Sub-Head 10-103 Small and Medium Enterprises Development, which shall be from page 257 quarter-way to page 258.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 257, item 26313.147 – *Extra Budgetary Units - SME Mauritius Ltd.* Last year an estimated amount of Rs60 m. was budgeted. Can I know from the hon. Minister how much out of this Rs60 m. has been spent by SME Mauritius?

Mr Bholah: How much has been spent, I do not have the answer right now. But this Rs60 m. is both for operating expenses as well as for the schemes.

Mr Uteem: The National Audit Office made negative comments on that.

Mr Bholah: One second please. Rs30 m. is for operating expenses and Rs30 m. for schemes, out of the Rs30 m., Rs21 m. has already been spent. This is the answer I have.

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

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item, 26313.147 – *Extra Budgetary Units - SME Mauritius Ltd.*, we have a decrease; it is the last item on page 257. On this item we have Rs60 m. and we have a decrease to Rs43,500,000. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us as to why we have a fall in the estimates?

Mr Bholah: For 2021, as I said earlier, the Rs60 m. comprised of two components, the operating expenses as well as the schemes, Rs30 m. each. Now for 2021-2022, the Rs43.5 m. is solely for the operating expenses. We have a provision of Rs40 m. at page 486 in the Budget Estimates and which is under the NRF - National Resilience Fund.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. I will take the hon. Juman, hon. Dhunoo and then hon. Armance.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 258, item 26323.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd (b) Upgrading of Building at Coromandel*, can I know from the hon. Minister how many SMEs are occupying the building now?

Mr Bholah: No, the building is not meant for occupation by any SME. It is for training purposes and we have the studios, etc. So if you want figures about this budget of Rs6.5 m., it is for upgrading the facility over there: upgrading of the yard, reinforcing security, alarm, fencing, etc., and then provision of equipment and furniture for training purposes.

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

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same item 26323.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd (a) Common Facility Centre*, can we know the status on this project?

Mr Bholah: The Common Facility, this was last year Rs9.5 m. Okay, this is a Common Facility Centre which is being developed at Coromandel, the Centre will house a

Leather Studio, a jewellery NCNC industrial 3D printing studio where entrepreneurs will be able to innovate, invent and create while using state of the art technology put at their disposal.

The Chairperson: Done hon. Minister?

Mr Bholah: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Armance! After that I will go to hon. Yeung Sik Yuen and the hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Armance: Item 26323.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd*, may I know who is the director of the SME Mauritius Ltd., salary and allowances, benefits paid to him? I am sure the hon. Minister will have it, this is a very easy question.

Mr Bholah: It is and in fact I just answered a PQ some weeks back. Anyway, I can tell you the Director is Mr Rabin Rampersad and he is being paid a basic salary of Rs185,000 per month and allowances because he does not have a company car so he is being given car benefits. I do not have the answer, but I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Item code 28225.002 – *Transfers to Private Enterprises - Accompanying Measures for SMEs*, can we know more about this project?

Mr Bholah: Yes, the Rs2 m. has been earmarked to cater for the development of new sectors. In fact, we have identified three sectors –

- (i) Aroma Therapy;
- (ii) Nutraceuticals, and
- (iii) Decorative Fish Farming.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed! Done?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any more questions? We go to Sub-Head 10-104 – Cooperatives Development, that is on page 258 until 259. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 259, item 28225.016 – *Transfers to Private Enterprises - Ornamental Fish Farm Scheme*, last year Mr Chairperson, there was a budget estimate of Rs300,000 and nothing as from this Financial Year onwards. May I know

from the hon. Minister, without digging into a policy discussion, whether the aquaculture sector is therefore definitely put aside by the Government?

Mr Bholah: Hon. David, just refer to my previous answer, where among the three sectors that we want to promote, there was the Decorative Fish Farming. In fact, we are not limiting to the cooperative sectors where we have only few, not few, but less than one thousand but we are bringing it under the SMEs sector where we have a wider population of SMEs who can benefit from that activity.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Ramyad! And then let me have hand raised!

Ms Ramyad: Page 258, item 26313.061 – *Extra Budgetary Units - National Cooperative College*, may we know the Head and the number of permanent contractual and part-time employees?

Mr Bholah: The Director is on contract basis. He has just been appointed as from the start of this month. You want the name? No and we do not have many staffs, there is less than 10, anyway.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, *Mr Chairperson*. Alors, page 259 item 28211.058 – *Other Expenses - Mauritius Women Entrepreneur Cooperative Federation*, est-ce que le ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre s'il compte diversifier les secteurs et ne pas se restreindre uniquement à l'artisanat, l'agriculture et la cuisine. Merci.

Mr Bholah: Vous avez raison l'honorable membre, c'est ce qu'on est en train de faire et on se sert du collège, le *National Cooperative College*, où nous comptons lancer d'autres activités et ainsi rassembler beaucoup plus de femmes entrepreneurs qui sont regroupées au sein des coopératives.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, then I will go to Hon. Mrs Mayotte and then hon. Juman. If I have more time; I will see more.

Mr Uteem: On page 258, item 26313.061 - *National Cooperative College*. May we know from the hon. Minister how many courses are currently run by the Cooperative College and the number of attendees at these courses? How many people attend these courses?

Mr Bholah: It is good to know also the number of staff; there are 11. Of the 11, one is on contract, it is the Director. The number of persons trained by the National Cooperative College during the year is 518. *Bon, il y a eu 599 participants au total.* Les cours, il y en a

plusieurs. Il y a, par exemple, *Hydroponic, Organic Farming, ICT, ISO*, Loi sur les coopératives, etc.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 256, item *31112.430 – Upgrading of ‘Maisons des Eleveurs/Maisons des Pêcheurs’*. Alors, M. le ministre, merci déjà pour la Maison des pêcheurs. C'est un projet qui est très attendu dans la région de Tamarin. Je voudrais juste vous demander où est-ce qu'on en est, est-ce que les travaux vont commencer bientôt et quand est-ce que ces travaux vont se terminer ? Et maintenant que les travaux de rénovation vont commencer, qu'est-ce qu'on va voir à l'intérieur de cette maison destinée aux membres de la coopérative des pêcheurs de Tamarin ?

Mr Bholah: Well, as you see, this Rs10 m. is quite limited. What we want is that the Cooperative Societies, which are engaged in fishing activity, they can at least bring their catch, process it, sell it, and whatever is left, we are going to have a cold room over there; we can store the fish for sale after the day. So, this is what the Rs10 m. will be used for.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Page 259, item *28225.017 – Boost to Local Production Scheme*, Rs3 m. Can we know more from the hon. Minister about this project and how the Rs3 m. have been spent, and who are the beneficiaries?

Mr Bholah: Well, we are talking about cooperatives; the beneficiaries should be the Cooperative Societies. Now, this boost to local production, we have provided financial aid to Cooperative Societies up to a maximum of Rs150,000 per cooperative, relating to local production in agriculture and food item, purchase of livestock, acquisition of equipment, machineries and other related accessories. In fact, we have targeted for 30 Cooperative Societies and we got applications for 80 Cooperative Societies, more than what we have targeted for. Now, given the success of this scheme, we are replicating for this year as well. Last year, it was Rs3 m., now this year, we are providing Rs5 m.

The Chairperson: I take a last question from hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: Page 259, item *28225.016 – Ornamental Fish Farm Scheme*, I can see that there is no more budget for it; it seems that the scheme has been scrapped. Can I know how many persons benefitted from the Rs300,000 that was voted last year, and the reason why there is no budget for the coming years?

Mr Bholah: Hon. Armance, just refer to the reply that I made to hon. David. In fact, it had not been scrapped; we have reallocated it to the SMEs Division and for last year, we got 9 Cooperative Societies which availed themselves of this scheme. In fact, they had followed a course which was run jointly by my Ministry, that is, Cooperatives, and the Ministry of Fisheries at Albion Fisheries Centre and following that, they were trained how to rear these species. So, nine Cooperative Societies came forward after following the course and they availed themselves of this facility.

The Chairperson: This item is done. I have Human Resource; I have time for only one question. I will take question from the senior-most Member, if any. Human Resource? Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 259, item 31132.106 – *Cooperative Division e-registration Project.*

The Chairperson: No, no! On Human Resource, page 260 onward.

Vote 10-1 Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Rs471,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.31 p.m.)

The Chairperson: We will break for dinner. I did not have time for tea earlier on.

At 7.32 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.00 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Please, be seated! Hon. Minister, are you ready?

Mr Ramano: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

(9.01 p.m.)

Vote 11-1 Environment and Climate Change was called.

The Chairperson: So, again, the same formula. We shall start with Vote 11-1 and the summary subhead. Please. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. Under item 26 – *Grants*, there is a substantial increase from Rs2 m. this current year to Rs53 m. this coming year and the subsequent years. Can we have more details about these grants, please?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister!

Mr Ramano: Yes, Mr Chairperson. So, the amount of Rs15 m., this concerns capital grant to the Beach Authority for projects.

The Chairperson: In fact, I will take page 267 and 268 at the same time, Sub-heading 11-101 as well, because this is the time allocated by the Whip. Yes. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Mr Chairperson, under same Item on page 268, the *Grant* regarding the *Beach Authority*, the Minister just mentioned for projects, may we have details of all the projects because this was not budgeted this year. It is like a new item to us as from next year.

Mr Ramano: You want the list of projects?

Mr Armance: Yes.

Mr Ramano: Okay.

Mr Armance: Will you table the list?

Mr Ramano: Sure! I can table the list but I think it would be good for me to list some of the major projects which are being undertaken by the Beach Authority. We have the funds amounting to Rs15 m. which will be used for the Financial Year 2021-2022 to contract works for the upgrading of parking areas and access of parking area of Bel Ombre. Contract works for provision of adequate designated parking at Petit Verger, Baie du Tombeau, Bras D'Eau public beach. Contract out works for the provision of solar lighting columns on public beaches and for the procurement of a new 4x4 lorry fitted with elevator.

I think the disbursement of funds will be undertaken as from January 2022 for Bel Ombre public beach and for Petit Verger, Baie du Tombeau, Bras D'Eau public beach, disbursement as from January 2022 and provision of solar lighting disbursement as from February 2022 and procurement by December 2021.

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

Mr Uteem: On same page 268, Item 22120.008 – *Fees - Fees to Consultants - Environmental Management Strategy for Mauritius*, may I know from the hon. Minister who

is the consultant undertaking this work and what is the total amount payable to that consultant?

Mr Ramano: Thank you. Mr Jean Saint Mars has been awarded the contract and he has been designated by the UNDP for a contract as International Institutional Expert for a duration of 3 months to carry out the institutional assessment and to edit the master plans.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 31121.801 - *Acquisition of Vehicles*. May we know why you are purchasing vehicles for Rs3 m.? What is the purpose of this acquisition, please?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramano: Which page, please?

The Chairperson: Let us listen to the answer of the hon. Minister and then, the complaint later.

Mr Ramano: Which page, please?

The Chairperson: Répondez, honorable ministre!

Mr Armance: We are on page 268, Item 31121.801.

Mr Ramano: Acquisition of Vehicles. This concerns increased provision made for the purchase of two double cab 4x4 to replace vehicles of the Ministry's fleet which are beyond economic repair and above 10 years old and which are subjected to frequent breakdown.

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

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Last question on this item.

Mr David: Page 268, item 31132.107 - *Environment Impact Assessment Licensing Project*, may I know from the hon. Minister the details about this project and the reason behind the reduction from Rs1 m. to Rs200,000? Thank you.

Mr Ramano: So, for the decrease, provision made for the purchase of all in one laser colour A4 printer and three 30-inch screen size notebook ultra-lights and one GPS. The e-Licensing Platform is operational since January 2021 and the purchase could not be done

because the supplier could not supply same because of unavailability in the market. Another bidding exercise has been launched in May 2021 and same is still at evaluation stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We are well over the time limit for this item. Sub-Head 11-102, page 269, 270. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, can I refer the hon. Minister to item 22900.009 - (h) *Promoting Circularity in Agricultural Practices* which seems to be a new project and to ask him what is it about?

The Chairperson: Would you want to file it later?

Mr Ramano: I do have it, Mr Chairperson, sorry for the delay. So, the funds allocated will be disbursed to Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, the FAREI which is the implementing agency to carry out drafting of a protocol to set up the experiments, setting up of experimental units at two Agro-Climatic Zones, laboratory testing and analysis to be undertaken by the Mauritius Standard Bureau and also these funds concern development of a technical report on effects of treated manure and printing of report for dissemination of information. So, a Project Steering Committee will be set up by the FAREI.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I will take it under the subheading itself, Environmental Protection. Can I ask the hon. Minister *Police de l'Environnement* falls under what heading because we can't see it on any of the pages that we have in the Budget?

The Chairperson: Would you have it right now, Minister?

Mr Ramano: I think I have the information. Please bear with me for some seconds. Mr Chairperson, provision made for payment of allowance to the Ministry on a monthly *ad hoc* allowance and allowance to 36 Police Officers of the Police of Environment.

(Interruptions)

It is in the item 21110.004 – allowances.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, now that we know that it is under allowances, can I ask the hon. Minister if he has the statistics for abandoned cars, if he has any survey or any study of how many cars his Ministry has seized because this has been the question of so many PQs in the House?

Mr Ramano: I don't have the information now but it will be with most pleasure that I am going to table the required information, Mr Chairperson.

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

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, can we know more about what type of studies and surveys have been carried out and why there is no budget for this year? Thank you.

Mr Ramano: Which item?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Item 22130.

The Chairperson: You should state the page number first, then the item.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Page 269

Mr Ramano: So, the amount voted for 2020/2021 was Rs575,000. It was an amount used to effect payment to QuantiLAB Ltd. for the screening of raw water for pesticides in accordance with provisions of the contract agreement and the Technical Committee to review the Environment Protection (Drinking Water Standards) Regulations 1996 recommended that prior to including additional pesticide parameters in the standards, a risk assessment should be carried out through the screening of raw water for pesticide to determine their likely presence. That is the justification for the study itself.

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

Mr Woochit: On item 22900.099 - (d) *Support to National Environment Policy*, Rs8,280,000 and this year, we have only Rs380,000 that has been budgeted. Can we know why this decrease in this item?

Mr Ramano: Which number, please?

Mr Woochit: Item 22900.099 - (d) *Support to National Environment Policy*.

Mr Ramano: So, the amount voted for 2021-2022 is Rs380,000. The amount will be used to conduct a validation workshop for the review of the Environment Protection Act and the Rodrigues component of the Master Plan for the environment of the Republic. So, the status of the project itself, the total sum budgeted within the Financial Year 2020-2021 as grants support from the UNDP was meant mainly for the formulation of an Environment Management Strategy for Mauritius and a Master Plan for the environment and the formulation of a Motorway Landscaping and Embellishment Plan in a holistic manner.

And for the Financial Year 2021-2022, the amount of Rs380,000 represents grants support provided by the UNDP to support the holding of a validation workshop on the review of the Environment Protection Act as well as on the Rodrigues component of the Master Plan for the environment for the next decade.

The disbursement schedule is for August 2021 for the holding of a validation workshop.

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

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 270, item 31122.999 – *Other Machinery and Equipment - Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment of which Equipment icw with Contingency Plan and Disaster Preparedness – Oil Spill*, can the hon. Minister provide more details as to the type of machinery and equipment that would be acquired or that have been acquired with the sum budgeted, that is, Rs100,000?

Mr Ramano: Mr Chairperson, the standard provision to cater for Contingency Plan and Disaster Preparedness in case of oil spill, a special Fund was created by the Accountant General Office to meet expenses related to MV Wakashio wreck and oil spill for eventual claims to the insurance company of MV Wakashio and concerning the list of equipment, I have a long list of equipment.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: For Rs100,000?

Mr Ramano: No sorry, this is the budgeted sum but the list that I have with me is a list which was available at the level of the National Coast Guard and the list which was available at the level of different authorities – National Coast Guard, Special Mobile Force and so on.

The Chairperson: I will take a last question. Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.002 – *Fees to Chairperson and Members of Boards and Committees*, can we have the list of the members of board and their respective fees please?

Mr Ramano: The list of statutory Boards and Committees –

- Environment Impact Assessment Committee;
- Environment Coordination Committee;
- Environment Liaison Officers;

- PER Committee;
- Industrial Waste Solid Committee;
- EIA/PER Monitoring Committee, and
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Committee.

Under the Climate Change Act, the committees which we will be having would be – the Departmental Bid Committee, Audit Committee and Bid Evaluation Committee.

Ms J. Bérenger: Can we have a list of the members, please?

Mr Ramano: These are ad-hoc committees. These fees are paid as recommended by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms and also as per PRB.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We are done by few minutes under this sub-head. Sub-head 11-103 starting from page 270 to 271.

Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 270, item 22120.007 – *Fees for Training (b) (i) Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action*, can the hon. Minister give us more details about this organisation and the reason of increase in the budget, please.

Mr Ramano: For the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, the amount voted is Rs1 m.; it is on the increase as from Rs700,000 to Rs1 m. The amount will be used for trainings on multi criteria analysis for mitigation actions, identification, development and implementation of mitigation actions and prioritisation framework, enhanced transparency framework and measurable reporting and verification and the financing of the NAMA itself.

The aim of the project is to develop a national mitigation strategy and action plan and Nationally Determined Contribution registry will be set up for an enhanced transparency framework. The project duration is 2017 to 2021, 4 years duration, and with extension till June 2022. The total grant fund is \$1.6 m. from the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Environment Programme as implementing agency.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 22090 – Security, I would like to ask the hon. Minister why is it that the sum has been doubled from last year to this year and for what purposes the security is meant for? Also, who is the beneficiary of this contract?

Mr Ramano: For security services, we have an increase. Provision for security services for the sites at –

- (a) Le Dauguet;
- (b) SSR Memorial Park;
- (c) Signal Mountain;
- (d) National Environment Laboratory, Reduit;
- (e) Petit Sable Beach;
- (f) Living Environment Unit Bell Village;
- (g) Living Environment Unit Mahebourg, and
- (h) Ambient air monitoring stations.

Contract was awarded to Rapid Security Services. I think I have given the list of the places.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Why has it been increased?

Mr Ramano: The reason for the increase is to cater for the higher costs of services provided for security services and also security services was provided for 1 additional site namely Priest Peak at Cité Martial.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Lobine, hon J. Bérenger and hon. Luchmun Roy, if we have more time.

Mr Lobine: Page 271, item 22120.008 – *Fees – Fees to Consultants*, there has been an increase to Rs10 m., can you provide a list of all the Consultants where fees are being paid to them?

Mr Ramano: For item 22120.008 - Fees to Consultants, we are concerned here with 4 main projects –

- (1) national appropriate mitigation action;
- (2) Biennial Update Report;
- (3) the fourth national communication;
- (4) needs assessment for implementation for Climate Change Act 2020.

You want the list of consultants –

- (a) For the Biennial Update Report, we have the BEA International Consultancy Firm, the national Consultant, Professor Bhanooduth Lalljee from University of Mauritius;
- (b) Quality Assurance Expert, Mr Jongikhaya Witi;
- (c) Editor – Mr Premchand Goolub, Consultant for the University of Mauritius for the development for the country specific emission factors for the waste sector.

For the fourth national communication, provision will be used for the payment of local experts for the development of project document and if the hon. Member wants more details, I am ready to submit the names of all the Consultants for the 4 main projects.

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

Ms J. Bérenger: Page 271, item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, there is a substantial decrease from last financial year to this financial year, can we have the reason please and which companies beneficiated from those grants from international organisations?

Mr Ramano: Hon. Member is talking about the item 22901, concerning uniforms?

Ms J. Bérenger: Page 271, item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, quelles sont les compagnies ou ONG qui ont bénéficié de ces grants et pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a une réduction dans le budget entre l'année financière dernière et cette année financière ? Merci.

Mr Ramano: One minute, please! I am going to be provided with the information.

The Chairperson: Would you at a later stage table the answer?

Mr Ramano: One minute, Mr Chairperson. So, the fees will be for local experts, the Ecological Living in Action for Components 1 and 3 of the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, which I have just mentioned.

Ms J. Bérenger: Ceux qui bénéficient des grants, c'est la même liste ?

Mr Ramano: *Non, comme j'ai expliqué, M. le président, il y a 4 items qui sont concernés. En ce qui concerne le Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, cela concerne l'Ecological Living in Action for Components 1 and 3 of the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions.*

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem! You still have a question?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem! I see your name here, that's why I'm asking. Anybody? Hon. Woochit has one. And, for the last one we are going for hon. Bodha.

Mr Woochit: Same page 271, *item 31121.801 – Acquisition of Vehicles*, Rs7.2 m. Can we know which type of vehicle it is – a car, a lorry?

Mr Ramano: Provision will be made for the purchase of two lorries double cab tipper at the estimated cost of Rs4 m. and one tipper lorry at the estimated cost of Rs2 m. and one minibus at the estimated cost of Rs1,200,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Last question, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to page 271, *item 22900, (d) Capacity Building in Transparency*. May I ask the hon. Minister to explain to us what is this project about?

Mr Ramano: Capacity building in transparency, the amount voted for 2021-2022 is Rs626,000. It is a new project. The amount will be used for inception, workshop, recruitment and salaries of Project Manager and Project Assistant, and also for the purchase of IT equipment and logistics. The objective of the CBIT project is to assist Mauritius on improving the quality of its GHJ inventory and the data collection, storage and dissemination process associated, thereby improving reporting and transparency and providing a firmer basis of evidence-based policy making.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I will take this last question from pages 272 and 273 from the senior most Member, if he has one. None? Thank you very much.

Vote 11-1 Environment and Climate Change (Rs441,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(9.30 p.m.)

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management was called.

The Chairperson: In fact, we will take both items together, that is, pages 274 and 275 together. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Page 274, item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*. I can see that a sum of Rs573,200,000 was voted for last year. Can I know if the cleaning services were contracted out and can we have the list of those contractors?

Mr Ramano: Cleaning services for public beaches, we have – sorry?

Mr Ramful: I can see that there are different items: public beaches, landfill sites, etc.

Mr Ramano: So, you want the list of contractors? For the public beaches, it is a long list. I am going to table it because we have several lots and different contractors for different lots. For operation of landfill sites, we have five transfer stations; we have different contractors for each transfer station. For electronic waste, the contract of recycling of e-waste was awarded to Neel Trading & Facilities Ltd in February 2019 for an amount of Rs13,445,791; the duration of contract was 18 months. I will submit the list of contractors for the different public beaches.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Hon. Quirin didn't have any. After him, I will go to hon. Dr. Aumeer and then hon. Ms Ramyad.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 274, item 22060.002 – *Other Structures (Closed Cells Mare Chicose)*, Rs15 m. was budgeted for 2020-2021. Can we have a breakdown of this amount, please?

Mr Ramano: We have, firstly, the closed cells at Mare Chicose with a budget estimate of Rs14 m. We have a post closure operation managed under the contract of Cell 6; the contractor is GV Sotravic Limitée and for the financial year 2021 the budget provided for Rs40 m., which will be used for payment of post-closure management effected for the months of May to November 2021.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Hon. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 274 Item 22070.010 – *Operation of Interim Hazardous Waste Facility*, we can see that the budget has doubled as compared to what it was last year. With regard to Hazardous Waste Facility, may we know whether there is inclusion with regard to medical waste, and if so, any more details about it?

Mr Ramano: The information which I have here is the Budget Estimate for 2021-2022 is Rs50 m., you are right. A new contract will be awarded for the operation, management and maintenance of the interim storage facility for hazardous waste at La Chaumiere Bambous.

Provision of Rs50 m. has been made in the Budget for the year 2021-2022 for the following –

Payment of invoices for the period of May 2021 to January 2022 for all the services and supply of all items remaining under the current contract as per the Ministry's contractual

obligation, including the exportation of 243 tons of hazardous waste and payment of invoices from February to April 2022 for services to be delivered by the new contractor, including payment for provision of performance security and all insurances by the contractor at the start of the contract. I am also informed that the hazardous waste interim facility does not accept medical waste.

The Chairperson: Thank you! Hon. Ms Ramyad!

Ms Ramyad: On page 275, under item 28222.021 – *Transfers to Households – Compensation for the Relocation of Inhabitants of Mare Chicose*, I understand it is the last part of the relocation. Can we get the number of inhabitants and why Rs3.4 m, for the relocation for this year?

Mr Ramano: Mr Chairperson, we are left here with only one family who remains to be relocated. However, the family concerned has expressed their interest to stay at Mare Chicose itself. This is a difficult situation for us. We are trying to do our best to solve this situation and we are relying upon the collaboration of the MPs of the constituency.

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

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 274, item 22070.003 and .004 – *Cleaning Services – Operation of Landfill Sites – Operation of Transfer Stations*, I see the figure for one is constant and the other one is increasing as from next year. At a time when the hon. Minister has proposed the concept of *Economie Circulaire*, one would expect that this figure should go down instead of increasing. Can I ask the hon. Minister why is the figure increasing?

Mr Ramano: Let me give some more information to the House.

M. le président, donc c'est vrai que nous venons de l'avant avec cette politique d'économie circulaire mais au niveau du Landfill à Mare Chicose, nous nous engageons là, dans tout ce processus de *vertical expansion* au niveau du centre d'enfouissement de Mare Chicose. Nous considérons nous, à notre niveau, même que nous avons fait une étude de caractérisation des déchets et nous avons vu que 50-60% des déchets sont des déchets compostables ; il y a un pourcentage d'environ 20% qui sont des déchets recyclables et il y a aussi environ 14% de matière plastique. Mais nous considérons qu'il y aura toujours un pourcentage qui restera comme rebut et qui sera toujours enfuit.

Donc, c'est la raison pour laquelle, c'est vrai que nous sommes en train de travailler sur toute la politique d'économie circulaire mais à notre niveau, il nous appartient de

continuer le management en ce qui concerne le centre d'enfouissement de Mare Chicose et prenant en considération aussi du fait que le centre d'enfouissement de Mare Chicose est arrivé à un point de saturation. Il nous appartient de venir de l'avant avec des mesures pour pouvoir pallier à ce manquement.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance, you did not have any until now!

Mr Armance: Mr Chairperson, concerning item 22,070.004 – *Cleaning Services – Operation of Transfer Stations*. I want to know specifically the name of the contractors operating the 5 transfer stations and the fees paid to them yearly by the transfer stations?

Mr Ramano: We have 5 transfer stations.

1. We have the transfer station of La Chaumière. The company which is presently managing the transfer station is Sotravic Ltée. The total yearly contractual amount is Rs69,381,209.
2. At Roche Bois, we have GV Square Deal Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. and the total yearly contractual amount is Rs70,305,633.
3. The transfer station of Poudre d'Or, it is Maxi Clean Company Ltd and the contractual amount is Rs76,659,000.
4. For the transfer station of La Laura, it is Compagnie Régionale des Services et de l'Environnement Ltée for an amount of Rs37,218,600.
5. Finally, at La Brasserie, we have Sotravic Ltée for a total contractual amount of Rs33,436,277.

The Chairperson: Done, hon. Minister? You are okay, hon. Minister?

Mr Ramano: Yes, I have completed.

The Chairperson: I can take only one last question from all the pages, including 276! Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: At page 275, under item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, there is a decrease in the allocated budget, can we know why and which studies and surveys are we talking about and the consultants please?

Mr Ramano: Studies and Surveys. So, we have Phase II of the Solid Waste Strategy and Action Plan which started in November 2020 and will be completed in June 2021 and

this is fully funded by the *Agence Française de Développement*. It is only the VAT component which is being paid by the Mauritian Government.

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management (Rs705,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(9.43 p.m.)

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, are you ready? Thank you very much. So, we will sub divide your Ministry under General, secondly Financial Services, and thirdly Public Sector and Governance Reform. We have divided into three subheadings.

Thank you very much. Let's start with the first subheading: 12-101, starting from page 281 to 282 halfway.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 282, under item 22,120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*, there was an amount of Rs17.8 m. last year and that amount has been reduced to Rs3 m. May I know from the hon. Minister how much of these Rs17.8 m. has been paid and who was the consultant?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, the fees for last year was mainly to address deficiencies of the FATF. So, we have had to have recourse to trainers and also some costs for consultancy firms. And from the information that I have, most of the amounts provided for, have been spent during that financial year.

Mr Uteem: The consultant and the amount paid, that was the question.

Mr Seeruttun: Like I said, there were lots of training that were conducted during that financial year and, therefore, we had consultants from the EU on AML/CFT, whereby we had to cater for when they were brought in here, we had to arrange for their accommodation. We had experts from the Optima; also we had to pay for the fees. We had also recourse to one lobby firm during the time that we were known that we were going to be on the EU blacklist. So, these are the different services we had recourse to during that financial year.

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

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On page 282, may I refer the Minister to Item 26313.015.

Mr Seeruttun: Which page?

Dr. Boolell: Page 282. I am referring you to Item 26313.015 – *Financial Intelligence Unit*. So, this relatively substantial increase compared to the estimates which were budgeted for Financial Year 2020-2021, there is an increase to Rs76 m. If the Minister could enlighten us as to how this sum is being spent?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, Mr Chairperson. The mandate of the FIU has been enlarged and now they cater also for what they call the Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs). Hence, we have to beef up the resources; we have to cater for additional officers. In fact, we have catered for some 30 more officers to beef up that institution and over and above, we have to also cater for the equipment and the office space as well. So, a list of different expenditures has to be incurred to be able to meet those requirements.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same item at page 282, 26313.016 - *Financial Reporting Council*, there has been an increase of Rs6 m. from Rs25 m. to Rs31 m. Can the Minister enlighten the House?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, for the FRC, I am informed that last year they had some savings. In fact, their expenditure had not gone up but last year since they had some savings, they used up these savings to fund their expenditure. So, this year there are no more these savings as they were used up. They need that amount to be able to cater for all the expenditures that they have to incur.

The Chairperson: Thank you, very much. Hon. Juman, last question.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.114 - *National Committee on Corporate Governance*, I can see Rs1.5 m. was spent. Can I have details and breakdown on how it was spent and how many times the Committee met and also why the budget almost doubled?

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, for the National Committee on Corporate Governance, the increase in the budget is due to the fact that they are coming up with what you call a scorecard to assess the different companies that are listed on the stock exchange, to see what they are performing with regard to good governance and there is a number of tasks that they have to do in terms of conducting the surveys and all that. So, these are the costs that are incurred for the setting up of the scorecard that they had to come up with.

The Chairperson: Thank you, very much. Next *Sub-Head 12-102*, page 282, bottom part. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I had on the previous one.

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 282, under item *26313.152 - Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd*, may we know why there is a decrease in the sum being allocated to this institute, how many employees do they have and who is the Director of this company, please?

Mr Seeruttun: The Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd is the training arm of the Ministry; they provide training to the different stakeholders of that particular sector. So, the objective is to provide paid courses as long as they can generate their own funding. So, that is why you will see from one year to the next, they are providing more and more of those paid courses. That is why you see a reduction in the amount of money that they are requiring from the Ministry to fund the operational expenses.

Mr Lobine: Who is the Director?

Mr Seeruttun: The Director is Mr Mohamed Khan.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem and then I will come to hon. Ramful.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *21110 – Personal Emoluments*, I note that there is now going to be an amount of Rs14.5 m., out of which Rs8 m. is for the new post of the Money Laundering Department. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many of these positions have now been filled?

Mr Seeruttun: It is good to know that previously, Mr Chairperson, these employees were on a contractual basis. What we are doing now is trying to bring them on the permanent establishment and that is why they are no more under what we call ‘extra assistance’, ‘extra allowances’. Now, they are on the personal emoluments.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Under item *26210.036 - Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering*, can we have an indication when the follow up report will be published?

Mr Seeruttun: Follow-up report, Mr Chairperson, well, that has nothing to do with this exercise.

The Chairperson: Sure, this is what I was expecting from you. It does not concern Committee of Supply.

Mr Seeruttun: It has nothing to do with this exercise.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. We take the next question. Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte, then I will go to hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 282, Item 26313.015 - *Extra-Budgetary Units Financial Intelligence Unit*, there is an increased budget to Financial Intelligence Unit of Rs31 m. Can the hon. Minister give us more details about that?

Mr Seeruttun: I did reply to this question earlier on. Because the mandate of the FIU has been enlarged so there are more works to be done and that is why we had to have additional staff. Also, we have the logistics also to be increased; the office space has to be increased. So, all the expenditures make it that we need additional funds for that.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I was going to hon. Osman Mahomed first.

Mr Osman Mahomed: The issue has been canvassed; if you can give me the first round of the next page, I will be happy.

The Chairperson: When time comes, we will cross the bridge.

(Interruptions)

In fact, let me take this opportunity to say so. I am trying to give all party Members at least one chance and sometimes it is not obvious that the person behind you is raising his hand and you are not aware of it and I am aware of it. So, please just bear with me. So, hon. Osman Mahomed does not want it, do we have anybody else who has a question on this item?

Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Page 282, I refer the hon. Minister to item 26313.140 - *Integrity Reporting Services Agency*. Now, the estimates are there and there is a slight increase for the Financial Year 21/22. I am sure the Minister has taken cognisance of complaints being made by the Directors of the Integrity Reporting Services Agency. In fact, this Agency wants to deliver and to be more performing. I am sure you have taken cognisance of complaints made by the Directors and Members of the Integrity Reporting Services Agency. I would like to hear from the Minister what measures have been taken to ensure that all the support will be given to them.

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, in this financial year we are going to cater for additional staff to be able to respond to the requirements of the Agency. So, that is why there is an increase in the budget to beef up that Agency.

The Chairperson: I have allowed you that one. We stick to the *Sub-Head 12-102*, any more questions? Thank you very much. We move to *Sub-Head 12-103*, page 283. Hon. Uteem is raising his hand.

Mr Uteem: We are at page 283, Item 22120 – *Fees*. There is a reduction in fees from Rs1.3 m. to Rs350,000. May I know what these fees relate to?

Mr Seeruttun: These are fees paid to, if I can recall, 22120 right? So they had recourse to some consultants last year and which is no more necessary this time.

Mr Uteem: Can you give details about the consultant?

Mr Seeruttun: The consultants for the Financial Year 2021; let me just check whether I have the details on that. I do not think I have it with me here, but I do know that they had recourse to some...

The Chairperson: You will find it at a later stage? Should you have it?

Mr Seeruttun: I am told that an amount was catered for consultancy, for setting up of a National Office of Good Governance. There was a bid exercise that was done and the amount of the lowest bid that was received was much more than the amount provided for, and due to budget constraint that project had to be deferred.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. I will go to hon. Osman Mahomed and then to hon. Dhunoo. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 22030 – *Rent*, I can see a substantial increase from this year to next year. May we know why and who is the owner of the place being rented and where is it?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, the Office of the Public Sector Governance is housed at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building in Port Louis. There is a possibility that they move to Ebène at the SICOM Tower where the cost of the rental is going to be much higher. So that is why we are catering for that increase.

Mr Osman Mahomed: In this year, it was at Emmanuel Anquetil Building and you had to pay rent?

Mr Seeruttun: Some of the services, I believe, are catered for, but there is no rental paid. But there are other expenditures that are related to the rent book probably, parking maybe, I do not know.

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

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 22040 – *Office Equipment and Furniture*, there has been an increase from Rs200,000 to Rs500,000. Can the Minister explain why?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, here again, to cater for renewal of new equipment because some equipment come to the end of their shelf life, and they need to be renewed. And also, with additional employees, we need to provide them with equipment for them to carry out the tasks.

The Chairperson: I move to page 284, any questions? Thank you very much.

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance (Rs 256,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(9:59 p.m.)

Vote 13-1 Office of the Solicitor-General was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, you are right in front of me.

Mr Uteem: Thank you. I will start on page 288.

The Chairperson: So let me just clarify it, okay? For the purpose of questioning, we can take it all. There we go – pages 287, 288, 289. We can go at all of it.

Mr Uteem: I would start with 28216.012 – *Transfers to Regional/International Organisations - Contribution for Operation of Mauritius International Arbitration Centre*, I see that there is an amount budgeted for this year of Rs24 m. May I know from the hon. Attorney-General, the number of cases that has been referred to MIAC for arbitration and the number of cases pending before MIAC?

Mr Gobin: I regularly answer in the same manner; this is a matter for arbitration. Therefore, my learned friend is very well aware of confidentiality in arbitration. As to statistics, this comes in the Annual Report of MIAC, which is published. I say, I may in the same vein answer as to the increase in budgeting. This is part of the expenses under the host agreement which Government of Mauritius has with the Permanent Court of Arbitration

(PCA). And in the coming year, we are going to have many more under MIAC promotion and development activities, purchase of IT equipment expenses and also to cater for rate of exchange of the euro.

Mr Uteem: I am not asking about details of the parties or award.

Mr Gobin: The number of cases has increased substantially and it is picking up. It is very positive and promising that is all I can say, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: The decision to reply rests on the Minister.

(Interruptions)

The decision still rests with...

Mr Uteem: 24 million?

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Gobin: If you are going to stick to these five numbers, you should also look at the magnitude. You know very well, you are a practitioner in the field.

The Chairperson: No, we are not arguing over it, the decision to answer rests with the Minister. Full stop! So, I have hon. Dr. Aumeer with a question!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.032 – *Fees of which Fees for Legal Outsourcing*, can I know from the hon. Minister further details on the outsourcing whether other chambers or law offices that were contracted? Thank you.

Mr Gobin: This caters for fees to external counsel and attorney, for cases which are outside our jurisdiction, for example, the cases at International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute in Washington; tribunal fees of Permanent Court of Arbitration. There is one case, as you know, which is pending - Patel Engineering, this caters for this fee. I can add that out of the Rs100 m. for last year, we had spent only about Rs42 m.

The Chairperson: I will give hon. Lobine then hon. Ramful and hon. Dhunoo. That is all the time I shall have. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 288, may we know who is replacing Mr Domingue at the head of the Law Reform Commission, please?

Mr Gobin: Yes, the new CEO was recruited following an open advertisement. He was already working at the LRC; he applied for it and he got the job; Mr Kadel. He was already working there.

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

Mr Ramful: With regard to the item in relation to 22120.032 – *Fees of which Fees for Legal Outsourcing*, would you mind tabling a breakdown of the...

Mr Gobin: There are some cases which are still pending so I cannot do that at this stage, at a later stage maybe. It is confidential when the cases are pending. As you know, once judgement will be delivered, the name of counsel and attorney will appear in the judgements, so there is nothing confidential.

The Chairperson: No argument over this! Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Sub-Head Capital Expenditure.

Mr Gobin: Which page are we talking?

Mr Dhunoo: Page 288, 31122.802 – *Other Machinery and Equipment - Acquisition of IT Equipment (a) Revamping of the Registry Systems; (b) Laws of Mauritius Online Project; (c) Central Archives System*, may we have a status on the projects?

Mr Gobin: Revamping of the Registry, this is almost completed. It includes also the archiving at the Office, as the name suggests. For the Laws of Mauritius Online Project this, as the name suggests once again, is a project where all the laws of Mauritius, the revised laws of Mauritius are going to be put online on the website of the AGO. As for Laws of Mauritius Online, yes I can give you the contractor if you want. The Laws of Mauritius was awarded to Infosystem AA Ltd; for revamping of Registry system, it was awarded to Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd, and the Central Archives System, to Leal Communications & Informatics Ltd and also to State Informatics Limited.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Last question, I will take from hon. Aadil Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 288, 22120.032 - *Fees for Legal Outsourcing*. Last year, there was a budget of Rs100 m. I heard from the hon. Minister that he cannot give the details as some cases are pending. Therefore, can I ask him for the cases that are not pending, that is, cases which have already been settled? So, if he can give the details and the respective amounts.

Mr Gobin: I will have to compile it and come back to the House, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Time is over!

Vote 13-1 Office of the Solicitor-General (Rs317,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.07 p.m.)

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 291, Item 22120 – Fees, may we have details about what these fees relate to?

Mr Gobin: It represents fees for training of staff, Privy Council Agents and associated fees.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Done, Minister?

Mr Gobin: Yes.

The Chairperson: Second question!

Mr Uteem: Page 293, may I know, out of the 149 funded positions, how many vacancies there are?

Mr Gobin: There has been a recent recruitment. I will be surprised if we have still funded vacancies, but it would be rather minimum.

The Chairperson: Any more question?

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Rs157,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.09 p.m.)

Vote 13-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (Rs20,400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 13-4 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, is your staff ready? Are you ready?

Mr Gobin: Yes.

The Chairperson: So, for the purpose of questioning, I will take pages 300 and 301 halfway, until *Sub-Head 13-401: General. Question!*

Mr Uteem: On page 301, *22130.001 - Studies - Sugar Cane Sector (World Bank)*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to table the Report of the World Bank?

Mr Gobin: Not at this stage, Mr Chairperson. It is being examined by a multi-disciplinary team composed of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities as well as my Ministry to look into the implications of implementation of those recommendations. It will come, of course, to the House at the appropriate stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell and then I will go to hon. Ramful.

Dr. Boolell: Well, the question has been put, except that I would like to ask the Minister, same page, on the same item, *22130. 001 - Studies - Sugar Cane Sector (World Bank)*, why is the Ministry taking so long? I can understand that you have given some explanation, but it is long overdue. I would expect the Minister to come forward and to submit the report.

Mr Gobin: No, it is not long overdue, I beg to differ.

(*Interruptions*)

We signed it in January 2020. The hon. Member should check his facts, as to when we signed; we were delayed by COVID; when we got the report, and now it is being considered once again by the multi-disciplinary team...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No, no! No argument over policy decision! Next question! Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Under item *22120 – Fees*, can we have some details with regard to this, please?

Mr Gobin: Yes, the number of departmental committees, as has been repeated *ad nauseam* since yesterday: Departmental Tender Committee, Bid Evaluation Committee and all the ad hoc Administrative Committees within Ministries. This includes Land Conversion Committee which is set up under the SIE Act, Ramsar Committee for wetlands, etc. It is composed of public officers, as you would know. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo is the last hand I see, and then I will come to you, hon. Aadil Ameer Meea.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 301, under Item 22030 – *Rent*, there has been an increase from Rs15.5 m. to Rs17 m. Can the hon. Minister provide a breakdown?

Mr Gobin: Yes, we have to pay rent at premises situated in NPF Building, Blendax House and Sterling House, as well as parking. The increase caters for the normal annual increase as per contractual obligations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, on page 300, item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs1.5 m. May we have the details of this?

Mr Gobin: I think this refers to my two Advisers, one Press Attaché and one PRO; that is all.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can you circulate the name and the respective amount?

Mr Gobin: They are paid as per PRB...

Mr Ameer Meea: No, every Minister to whom we have asked the question...

The Chairperson: No, no, no! Hon. Ameer Meea!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: It is public money! We have to know! Even the hon. Prime Minister gave the list of Advisers!

The Chairperson: Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, for the last time, if you think that you can raise your voice in this Chamber just because...

(*Interruptions*)

No, no, no! If you think you can raise your voice in this Chamber just because you feel like it, you feel that it is a playground, that is not the proper attitude in here. So, please keep your tone down. It is a tough night. Decision to answer rests on the Ministers. I am very, very courteous. In your own terms, 'I am very nice'.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister has adopted an attitude that this thing is public knowledge. We are here in Parliament and Parliament is sovereign. We are here to ask for a

budget; we are allowed to ask the information, and I gave the example of the hon. Prime Minister. He gave the number of Advisers and the respective amounts. So, I think it is fair, on our side, to have the information that is required.

The Chairperson: I really want to reply. Initially, your voice was very, very sweet, I enjoyed it. But then, it got a little bit...I do not have to describe. What the hon. Minister does is not the question today. What the Standing Orders provide is the question. I hope you have a copy in your desk.

(Interruptions)

Very good! So, use it!

Mr Gobin: I was saying, why I say PRB because it is a long list of allowances and figures. I only have two advisers and I know them. I meet them every day.

The Chairperson: Minister, we are not...

Mr Gobin: So, one Press attaché is Mrs Sanjana Cadervaloo and one PRO is Mr Ramhota. Of course, he comes from my own constituency.

The Chairperson: Let's not go into an argument. Let's get questions going.

Alright! The Clerk is telling me the time is over for this. And you are making me lose that track as to where I am reaching.

An hon. Member: 13-402.

The Chairperson: Now Sub-head 13-402, pages 301, 302, that's it. Hon. Ramful has his hand raised. Then we will go to hon. Dhunoo and then we will come to hon. Dr. Boolell.

Mr Ramful: With regard to Item 28212.030 - *Transfers to Households Payment to Planters - Sugar Cane Sustainability Fund*,

Mr Gobin: Yes, on page 302.

Mr Ramful: Can I know if all the planters have been paid the R 25,000?

Mr Gobin: R 25,000 up to 60 tons.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The midnight jingle bell, please answer.

Mr Ramful: All of them have been paid?

Mr Gobin: Sorry, say it again.

Mr Ramful: All the planters have been paid for last year?

Mr Gobin: They are going to be paid, there is a balance, I believe, which is paid. I know they are paid in advance and then there was a last remaining balance which is paid. I do not think it has been so but it should be any time now.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Boolell! You have a question?

Dr. Boolell: Yes. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: I saw you did raise your hand.

Dr. Boolell: Page 302 Minister, Item 28223.021 - *Non-Financial Public Corporation - Mauritius Cane Industry Authority of which (a) - Land Mechanisation Service - Renewal of tractor fleet, (b) Acquisition of Harvesters and In-fielders*, now I know there is a project value and the sum will be disbursed as from this Financial Year 2021-2022, if the Minister could apprise the House as to the number of harvesters and the tractor fleet which the Ministry is going to acquire to facilitate the land preparation of planters.

Mr Gobin: Yes, this is a new measure announced in this Budget. The budgeted amount as the hon. Member has highlighted is spread over 3 years. How many can we purchase, it is a bit early for me to say, that would depend on the market value. Tenders are going to be floated.

Dr. Boolell: You have a fair number.

Mr Gobin: Yes, we need to replace all those tractors.

The Chairperson: Hon Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 301, Item 25210.023 *Non-Financial Private Enterprises - Fertilizer Scheme to Sugarcane Planters*, Rs57 m. has been earmarked. Can we know more about the scheme?

Mr Gobin: This represents the amount spent on 50% subsidy for fertilisers of course to sugar cane planters and it targets about 7500 planters.

The Chairperson: Minister, thank you very much. Hon. Bodha, then I will go to hon. Woochit. We go. Hon. Bodha first then and then you.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same Item 28225.014 - *Transfers to Private Enterprises - Accompanying Measures to restore Abandoned Cane Lands*, you have a budget of Rs30 m. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a target as regard to the acreage which can be restored over this year?

Mr Gobin: Yes, totally! Yes. The target is 500 hectares; we have reached about 312 hectares. Efforts are ongoing.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit, go on.

Mr Woochit: On page 302, Item 26323.028 *Extra-Budgetary Units - Irrigation Authority...*

Mr Gobin: Sorry, 26323 – *Irrigation Authority...*

Mr Woochit: ... of which (b) *Irrigation Projects (Improvement/Maintenance of Irrigation System)*, where we have identified Rs181 m., can we know how much fund has been disbursed from this one?

Mr Gobin: No this is the project value of Rs181 m. Now the expenses are spread over three years and the hon. Member will be very happy to learn that this project concerns Centre Pivot at Pointe aux Piments plus portable pipes in the region of Triolet. That is it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over for this item! I will move to Item 13-403, page 303, 304, 305, that's about it. 303,304,305! Give your page first, then Item number, on rare occasions I see hon. Richard Duval.

Mr R. Duval: Page 305, Item 31112.022 - *Non-Residential Buildings - Construction of a National Wholesale Market*, can the Minister give information regarding status of the project and money spent?

Mr Gobin: Which project please?

Mr R. Duval: 31112.022

Mr Gobin: *National Wholesale Market*

Mr R. Duval: Yes. *Construction of a National Wholesale Market*

Mr Gobin: This is nearing completion. We expect the market to start operations last quarter of this year. Expected date is September 2021.

The Chairperson: Done Minister. I will take hon. Anquetil, hon. Osman Mahomed, hon. Joanna Bérenger and hon. Dhunoo. If I have time, I will give more.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 303, Item 25210.018 - *Non-Financial Private Enterprises - Scheme for Acquisition of CCTV cameras (including Solar-Powered Cameras)*, can the Minister table the list of the beneficiaries for the last Financial Year please? Thank you.

Mr Gobin: Alright. There are about, for the last Financial Year, I am informed 45 beneficiaries. The Scheme is administered by the FAREI. I will have to compile the list and table it at a later stage.

The Chairperson: Next one!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. Item 22090 – *Security*, we see...

Mr Gobin: Page?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Oh sorry. Page 303, Item 22090 – *Security*, may I ask more details about what security is for in the sector Development of Non Sugar Sector and for which it has been doubled from this current year to next year, from Rs12 m. to Rs23 m.?

Mr Gobin: Yes Mr Chairperson, the Security Services at offices, out stations, the Ministry has a number of out stations, non-sugar crop around Mauritius and as has been said by my colleagues before, we have to factor in the increase in amount payable to security guards. The House will appreciate, in 2019 when the remuneration order was amended, security guards could not work more than 8 hours shift. So, you have to employ more. This is why all those Ministries as you have seen since yesterday, have seen their Security Services Budget increase. So, let me give you an example of so many outstations –

- Barkly Experimental Station;
- Curepipe Experimental Station;
- Plaisance Experimental Station;
- Roches Brunes Seed Production Centre;
- Engineering Compound in Richelieu;
- Fumigation Plant Office in Mer Rouge;
- Richelieu Experimental Station;
- Belle Vue Experimental Station, and
- Quatre Bornes Horticultural Centre

All these need security services.

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

Ms Bérenger: Page 303, Item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services of which Green Agricultural Certification / Certification of Fresh Agricultural Produce (Mauritius Standard Bureau)*, est-ce qu'on pourrait savoir en quoi consiste cette certification? Est-ce que c'est des produits organiques? Combien de certificats ont été donnés pour la dernière année financière et pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a une réduction de R 5 millions à R 2 millions pour cette année financière ? Merci.

Mr Gobin: This Certification is the MauriGAP - the Mauritius Good Agricultural Practice. Now, why is there is a reduction? Since August of this year, the MauriGAP Certification is managed by the Mauritius Standards Bureau and therefore, our Budget at the Ministry of Agriculture has reduced because we share it with MSB. For last year, 19 growers were certified MauriGAP.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Tour, did you raise your hand as well? Hon. Dhunoo first!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 304, Item 28215.003 – *Sheltered Farming (Including Subsidy on sheltered unit nets)*. Last year, a budget of Rs45 m. was earmarked and this year there has been a decrease by Rs15 m. I would like to know how many people have benefited from the sheltered farming, under how many acres and why the decrease?

Mr Gobin: 95 beneficiaries, and this is administered by FAREI. The decrease is based on actual trend of expenses.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bodha has one.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On top of page 304, Item 25210.022 – *Crop Loss Compensation Scheme*, there was a budget of Rs16 m. Can the hon. Minister provide us with some details as to how this money was spent this year?

Mr Gobin: Around 2675 beneficiaries. This, of course, is administered by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund to compensate for droughts, floods etc. As the hon. Member knows very well, this year we have had the recent flash floods, so this has been included in it. That is all that I have for now.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Time is over for this item. We shall move to sub-head 13-404, pages 306 and 307. 2 pages!

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I will try to be sweet.

The Chairperson: Which Item number? You do not have to be sweet.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, you never know. Item 25110.003 - *Mauritius Meat Authority*, may I know from the hon. Minister where matters stand in relation to the opening of the deer hunting season?

The Chairperson: Does it even arise in Committee of Supply?

Mr Gobin: To MMA?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, of course. In case we do not know. You have a previous Minister of Agriculture next to you, you can ask him.

The Chairperson: Do not argue!

Mr Gobin: The MMA does not decide when the deer hunting season will start. This is what I mean.

(*Interruptions*)

No, I understand. There are concerns about it. I know it is committee of supply but I want to reassure the House, we are working on it. It is a health measure. We are in consultation with the Ministry of Health to know when we can authorise the deer hunting. I hope personally it is going to be sooner than later.

The Chairperson: Let us hope together then. I have these two Members who have not had the chance, Hon. Mrs Tour and Hon. Doolub. Am I correct? Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 307, Item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment of which Acquisition of Veterinary Ambulance*, I would like to have some information on the services this ambulance will offer?

Mr Gobin: This is for the Ministry's Ambulance for their livestock and veterinary division of the Ministry. We need one mobile clinic to provide for veterinary services to animal breeders around the country.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub, it is your first chance for this evening, isn't it?

Mr Doolub: Not too sure, maybe the third time.

The Chairperson: I see hon. Members even at the top. Go ahead!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 306, Item 25210.001 – *Subsidies-Incentives for Livestock (Animal Feed)*, I noticed a substantial increase from Rs10 m. to Rs20 m. Can the Minister provide some reasons for this increase?

Mr Gobin: This was announced in the Budget where the subsidy provided to animal breeders for the purchase of animal feed has been doubled this year, from Rs4 per Kilo to Rs8 per Kilo.

The Chairperson: You know how to score at first stance. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 306, Item 25210.015 – *Incentives for Milk Production*, may I know from the hon. Minister why this decrease in the amount budgeted from Rs1 m. to Rs500,000?

Mr Gobin: Now, this is based on the actual trend of expenses and it is very unfortunate. We want to increase but we have spent only so much last year. So, this is why there is a reduction. For last year, we have had only 55 beneficiaries. This consists of a payment of Rs5000 per calf. So, this helps them to raise the calf up till lactation. Therefore last year, we had disbursed only Rs395,000. We are working on it. We will have to spend more.

The Chairperson: Just one last question, I think, hon. Mayotte did not have any as well.

Mrs Mayotte: It is at page 307, Item 31112.452 – *Upgrading of Veterinary Hospital*. Can the hon. Minister give us more information about this Veterinary Hospital, please?

Mr Gobin: Yes. This is that famous building in Port Louis. Now, I am pleased to inform the House that we are going to move from there and we are going to Plaine Magnien. The building at Plaine Magnien belongs to the Ministry, so we do not need to purchase. We have already handed over the keys to MSAW and there will be some renovation in MSAW. So, that veterinary hospital in Port Louis, we are going to have a fresh look at what to do with that building.

The Chairperson: Time over for this item. Item 13-405: *Forests*. Page 308! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Page 308, Item *31410.401 – Rehabilitation, Upgrading of Nature Reserves & Parks*, I note a substantial decrease, half of the budget.

Mr Gobin: Sorry. Please bear with me. Which page?

Mr Uteem: Page 308, last Item *31410.401 – Rehabilitation, Upgrading of Nature Reserves & Parks*, I note, unfortunately, that there is a reduction of the amount budgeted. May I know from the hon. Minister the reason for that reduction?

Mr Gobin: We are concerned with very few sites as compared to the National Parks and Conservation service. Here, we have targeted for this year, the Greenhouse situated at Curepipe Headquarters, *près du Jardin Botanique à Curepipe. Et deuxièmement, Ilot Gabriel et Ile aux Bénitiers*. And this amount budgeted will, in our assessment be enough. Let me check. Yes, that's it.

The Chairperson: I was meant to come to you. Then, we will go to hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Again, page 308, Item *31410.401 – Rehabilitation, Upgrading of Nature Reserves & Parks*, may we have a breakdown or statistics if it is available with regard to the number of endemic trees that have been planted during this financial year, whether there has been any statistics to this?

Mr Gobin: Yes, I know there are statistics but I will need to obtain it from the Forestry Service in Curepipe.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 308, item *22090 – Security* - I am sorry I have to come back to this Security issue again. You mentioned about there is a change in the legal provision in terms of shift but here it is constant. If I go one page below, it has gone up by three times. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House about the inconsistency? I am not being rude but how come from Rs3.5 m. to Rs9 m. the page before, sometimes double and this time constant.

Mr Gobin: Because this is a new contract. It was signed after the remuneration order, it was signed last year, so the remuneration order was in 2019, this is 2020-2021 and then 2021-2022, so it stays the same.

Dr. Boolell: L'année 2021?

Mr Gobin: No, we signed last year.

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, I beg to differ, sorry. I am very sorry. The hon. Minister is trying to be ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! It is not the time for debate. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, I beg to differ.

The Chairperson: No. You can defer no problem; no time for debate though.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I want to seek clarification from the hon. Minister.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Dhunoo: May I, Mr Chairperson?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

The Chairperson: Maybe some hon. Member need a break. Hon. Dhunoo, please!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 308, item 31113.014 – *Other Structures – Landscaping Works-Motorway/Public Roads*, can we have a list of the places where the work will be done from the hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: I will have to compile a list but it is minimal as you understand, it caters for purchase of top soil and fertiliser for planting of some 6,000 plants along motorway M1. Now, where they are planted, now that will have to be compiled.

The Chairperson: Are we good, hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: Yes, I am done thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. You have been waiting politely, we will take one more question from you, question not debate.

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: One page before for this current year, the expenditure is Rs3.5 m. and next year it is going to be Rs9 m. because of the legal provision, I could

understand that. But on page 308 for this year, the expenditure for next year is the same. So, if I take the logic of the hon. Minister, item 22090 – *Security* - it is Rs5.25 m. this year spent and next year it is going to be the same.

Mr Gobin: I do not have the actual figure spent but since I told you it was a new tender, new contract signed, I can only reiterate what I have said.

The Chairperson: Thank you Minister. Hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell, you have a question, I have one minute.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Page 309, item...

The Chairperson: No, we have not reached there yet.

We will now move to item 13-406, page 309 and 310. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 309, item 22090 – *Security*, I find that there is a substantial increase from what the estimates was for the year 2020-2021 by more than 100%. Surely the hon. Minister will not tell us...

Mr Gobin: No. I believe there are more sites...

Dr. Boolell: Where are the sites? I mean you have to be fair and give us justifiable explanations.

Mr Gobin: I am waiting for the information. In the meantime, I can take another question.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 310, under item 31410.401- *Non-Produced Assets - Rehabilitation of Nature Reserves & Parks*, there is a project value of Rs112.5 m. but we see over the years, 2020 up to 2024, there is only some Rs3.7 m. that are being catered for the rehabilitation of those parks, can the hon. Minister provide us details why only that sum is being budgeted for the rehabilitation of those nature reserves?

Mr Gobin: I will need the information from the relevant department but I am assuming this is a project value over a long period of time. This is a very slow process for all those projects listed (a) to (f) as you can see, it spreads over a number of years. I have no more information at this stage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 31410.408 - *Non-Produced Assets - Mauritius from Ridge to Reef (EU Funded)*, I can see there is a project funded by the EU, can we have some details about this project?

Mr Gobin: We have signed this agreement with the European Union, where, as the name suggests it is a conservation project from the ridge of a mountain up to the reef, with particular focus on our endemic forests, where we need to restore and we can create new ones. Here, we have had funding from the EU to the tune of 4 m. euros which is being jointly managed by the Ministry and the representative of the EU. Government of Mauritius has also chipped in-kind about 500,000 euros. We have just signed it last year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 309, item 22090 – *Security*, the amount budgeted this year has doubled compared to last year, may we have some details about...

Mr Gobin: Yes, it is the same question asked by hon. Dr. Boolell.

The Chairperson: The question was asked.

Mr Gobin: Unfortunately, I will have to table the information because I do not have it up to now. I undertake to do so.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. No more questions? One more, please go on. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Yes under the same item if the hon. Minister could table the list of sites that have been identified?

Mr Gobin: *Oui.* Sites and service provider as well.

The Chairperson: Hon. Boolell, you do not have anything to say? We will move on. We will move to page 311 to 317, they all concern human resources. Any questions, please?

No questions, thank you very much.

Vote 13-4 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Rs2,290,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.45 p.m.)

Mr Chairperson: You will have to excuse me; I will need to break for about 10 minutes. It has been tiring for me too. We will break for 10 minutes.

At 10.44 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 11.13 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Please be seated. I apologize for the delay. I had to sort out an issue.

Vote 14-1 Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you and your officers are ready? Thank you very much. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Page 322.

The Chairperson: Let me set out the item that we shall consider. So, page 322, Sub-Head 14-101 which ends at page 323 only. Your question please and your item number!

Mr Quirin: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 322, item 21111.002 - *Travelling and Transport*, where an amount of Rs4.5 m. was budgeted for 2020-2021, can we have a breakdown of that amount, please?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, this was for payment of petrol allowance, PRB travelling, and refund of bus fares for Officers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Page 323, item 22030 – *Rent*, may we have the details on that?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, this is rent of the building. Sorry! Item 22030? Yes, rent of parking slots, Orlean Ltd parking slots, Mamood Surujbally; parking at Garden Tower, Hapeville Investments; so a total of 12, 7, 10 and 8 parking slots.

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

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Page 323, I refer the Minister to item 22120 – *Fees*. May we know as to whom those fees are paid?

Mr Toussaint: These fees are for the members of the Sports Arbitration Tribunal and for the Ombudsperson for Sport.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to come back to this item 22030 – *rent*. Surely, we are not paying Rs17.8 m. for parking slots!

Mr Toussaint: Which item? Sorry!

Mr Uteem: *Item 22030 – rent.* It's the same question as hon. Mrs Tour.

Mr Toussaint: *Celui qui est en haut ? Oui, c'est pour le bâtiment. C'est pour le* Rental of building at Citadel Mall. *Je me suis trompé avec le rent au bas. Donc c'est pour le bâtiment* Citadel Mall, *7^{ème} et 8^{ème} étages, mezzanine ; donc, total surface area of 24,760* square feet ; mezzanine, 3,246 square feet.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub, then I will come to hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, then hon. Juman.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 324 item .943...

The Chairperson: No, we are not there yet! I will give you later! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, page 323, item 21110.005 *Personal Emoluments – Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs11 m. budgeted this year. May we have the details of this figure?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, this is for 16 adviser coaches and for the medical staff situated at the SMU and also for 2 officers from the MNI that are looking after our capital projects, Mr Khedun and Mr Baloo.

Mr Ameer Meea: The 16 adviser coaches.

Mr Toussaint: Yes...

The Chairperson: Just a kind reminder, I know it is very hard to be attentive at this time but I requested question on item 14-101, is that what you have hon. Juman?

Mr Toussaint: C'est bon.

The Chairperson: You can?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, no worry.

Mr Juman: Page 322, item 21110 – *personal emoluments*, can I know from the hon. Minister, the number of staff attached to recreational activities?

Mr Toussaint: For the moment, Mr Chairperson, the recreational activities are being done by officers from the Youth Department. We have no officers attached to the Recreation Department.

The Chairperson: We have done with the heading 14-101? Done! 14-102! Hon. Léopold, then hon. Yeung Sik Yuen, then hon. David!

Mr. Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 324, item 28212.015 – *Transfers to Households – Allowances to High-Level Athletes*. Does this sum provide for high-performance athletes of Rodrigues as well, and who are they?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, allowance to high-level athletes; we have around 128 high-level athletes *qui sont en train de bénéficier de cette allowance. Et d'après les renseignements que j'ai, les athlètes d'origine rodriguaise, oui il y en a, le Dr. Baptiste, la Judokate, Christianne Legentil, Handisport, Brigilla Claire. Bon, c'est une longue liste, sans doute il y en a d'autres d'origine rodriguaise.*

The Chairperson: Thank you. I already set out! Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 324, item 31113.006 – *Other Structures – Construction of Sports Infrastructure (b) Swimming Pool in Curepipe*. I can see that there is an amount of Rs3 m. earmarked for this current year. Can I know whether this swimming pool is already in construction or it is already a dead project?

Mr Toussaint: This amount relates to consultancy for the design and feasibility. Unfortunately, *nous n'avons pas reçu un budget pour la construction de cette piscine* this year. Let us hope *si les choses s'améliorent économiquement, hopefully, après.*

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 324, item 31113.406 – *Other Structures – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (a) Lighting of Training Grounds*. Je vois donc, qu'il y avait un budget de R 3 millions prévu l'année dernière et ainsi de suite sur les années à venir. Est-ce que le ministre aurait la liste des terrains qui se trouvent dans la circonscription numéro 1 qu'il peut déposer à la Chambre après?

Mr Toussaint : Au fait pour cet item, c'est général. C'est-à-dire c'est les réparations, *as and when*, les réparations qui arrivent dépendant des *repairs that we have to do* au niveau des terrains de foot qui sont sous le ministère. Donc, ce n'est pas spécifiquement tel ou tel endroit.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo, then I will go to hon. Armance and hon. Woochit!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 325 under capital expenditure, item *31113.406 – Other Structures – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (e) Glen Park Multisports Complex*. There is an amount of Rs4.9 m. earmarked for the next financial year. Can we have more details as to the scope of works and what is the status of the project please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Je dois de toutes les façons remercier l'honorable Ittoo, parce que nous avons parlé de ce projet ensemble, cela fait un bon bout de moment maintenant. Et on est content, les deux, que nous avons eu le budget.

Donc, for the Glen Park Multisports Complex, for the scope of works –

- football pitch: replacement of existing chain-link fencing, replacement of rusted damaged CHS metal poles, provision of coping, painting of metal poles and existing block wall, provision of football goalpost.
- For the volleyball pitch: replacement of existing chain-link fencing, replacement of rusted damaged metal poles, provision of coping, painting of metal poles of existing block wall.

Donc, c'est repeindre, réparer tout ce qui a été un peu endommagé sur ce complexe.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mayotte, then I will go to hon. Juman, then I will go to - I was meant to give you! Sorry, I thought you had.

Mr Armance: Page 324, item *26313.141 – Extra-Budgetary Units – Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd*. One observation, the budget has drastically increased. Can we know why there is such an increase and secondly, can you give details of the Director of this MMIF, the salary and other benefits attached to the post of Director?

Mr Toussaint: Donc, M. le président, c'est le budget pour la gestion du complexe qui arrive à terme bientôt. C'est-à-dire *utilities, general expenses, security services, maintenance, repairs, landscaping, gardening, pool chemicals, pest controls, marketing cost, advertisement, website, social media and also for the human resource. At present the complex has around 52 staff and* c'est aussi par rapport à la gym et au HPC. Donc, le HPC, j'ai eu l'occasion de donner des renseignements lors de mon Budget Speech. Le HPC, où on a besoin d'installer les différents équipements de très haut niveau, *sports medicine* pour nos athlètes.

En ce qu'il s'agit du COO, *there is a COO at the level of Côte d'Or. The COO is Mr Ben Hiddlestone and he holds a Master of Business and Administration and a Bachelor of International Business and also several certificates in swimming, etc. And he has a salary of Rs200,000 per month.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Same page 324, item 31113.006 – *Other Structures – Construction of Sports Infrastructure (ii) Triolet.* Rs225 m. have been earmarked and Rs22 m. for last budget earmarked and nothing on site. Physically nothing has been started. Can the hon. Minister give some details on this item?

Mr Toussaint: *I do not want to be nasty but in your budget speech you referred to a panneau, etc. Unfortunately, quand nous sommes arrivés on a dû tout revoir pour des questions de procurement qui ont été mal faits. Et donc, nous avons un consultant qui a travaillé sur le projet. Donc, depuis que je suis au ministère, il y a un consultant qui a donné un design, qui a donné toutes les spécifications. Pourquoi ça a tardé, et d'ailleurs l'honorable Callichurn et Ramkaun sont au courant, souvent on parle de ce projet. Donc pourquoi ça a tardé, c'est les vas et viens avec le procurement. Où il faut mettre toujours de documents, il faut mettre en ordre, il y a certains renseignements qu'il n'y a pas dans le tender documents. Et, bonne nouvelle, donc le 11 juin the revised bidding documents were forwarded to the CPB. En espérant que tout se passe bien et que le CPB est satisfait avec tous les renseignements qu'ils ont demandé pour ce projet, le process will go on, et let us hope que, d'ici la fin de cette année, nous avons un contracteur et que le travail pourra commencer d'ici janvier 2022.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Page 324, Item 22900.944 - *Other Goods and Services of which International/Regional Games (b) Jeux des Jeunes Elites (U17).* Can the hon. Minister explain why this considerable decrease from Rs4 m. to Rs2 m.?

Mr Toussaint: *Yes, Mr Chairperson, les Jeux des Jeunes Elites que nous avions faits auparavant étaient résidentiels. Donc, on voulait déjà donner à nos jeunes sportifs élites de moins de 17 ans l'habitude de rester dans un village des jeux pour les préparer pour les compétitions à venir, que ce soit régional, jeux des îles, que ce soit international, Commonwealth, francophone, jeux olympiques. Mais malheureusement, à cause de la Covid, nous n'allons pas pouvoir organiser les jeux sur une base résidentielle ; les jeux vont se faire*

pour nos jeunes athlètes élites sans, bien sûr, l'aspect résidentiel. C'est ça qui fait que le budget a diminué de R 4 millions à R 2 millions.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item pertaining to 31113.006 - *Construction of Sports Infrastructure (a) Multi Sports Complexes (i) Port Louis* on page 324. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this refers to the Ward 4 Multisports Complex, if this project is still on, and if it is not related to this, whether the plot of land is still vested in this Ministry? Because I hear it has been vested in another Ministry for something else.

Mr Toussaint: Sorry, je ne peux pas me situer par rapport à Ward 4, etc. Je vais vous donner à l'honorable membre le *plot of land*, et vous allez me dire si c'est ça ; *corner Harris Street and Mayor Street*. Donc, il y a un consultant qui a travaillé sur le projet. Nous avons deux soucis, et éventuellement, dans quelques mois, nous allons prendre une décision au niveau du ministère pour voir si on va reloger le projet ailleurs. Nous avons deux soucis ; premièrement, c'est qu'il y a un gros souci de *geotechnical* là-bas et, deuxièmement, c'est par rapport au *Ring Road*.

Donc, supposément, si le *Ring Road* phase deux - je ne sais plus combien de phases - continue, cela va passer à côté, et pour le moment, on ne sait pas encore ce qu'il en est. Donc, éventuellement - je ne peux pas attendre éternellement -, si nous ne sommes pas satisfaits avec ces deux points, on va bouger le projet ailleurs, dans la région de Port-Louis bien sûr.

(*Interruptions*)

Donn mwa details, mo bizin don details!

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, the time is...

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, the time is over by 2 minutes.

(*Interruptions*)

I am so much minded to have a laugh at it, but let me stick to the time, please.

(*Interruptions*)

Next one! Give each and every one the chance put a question. *Sub-Head 14-103*. Who did not have a question?

(Interruptions)

Sub-Head 14-103. Who has a question? First hands raised that I saw were hon. Ittoo and hon. Ramful. I will go again by catching the eyes after this one. Hon. Ittoo, go on.

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 326, Item 22900.951 - *Smart Youth Programmes*, I see a new item (j) *National Recreation Programme* to the tune of Rs12 m. for next financial year and coming years. Can we have more information about this programme, please? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, since 2019, my Ministry has the responsibility of recreation. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, we were unable to set up a department. Thanks to the hon. Minister of Finance for giving us a budget this year so that we can organise recreation activities. *Donc, c'est un budget qu'on vient d'avoir et on a commencé à travailler et à réfléchir, et en temps et lieu, donc, nous allons market toutes les activités recreation que nous allons faire.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful, then hon. Armance and hon. Mrs Tour.

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 325, Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, I can see a budget of Rs1,800,000. Can we have some details about this item please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, this relates to salaries to Advisers on contract, sessional coaching fees, and extra duty allowance.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Page 326, Item 22900.951 – (e) *Zenes Montre to Talents*. I can see that the budget has decreased by nearly half. May we have some reasons please?

Mr Toussaint: Bien sûr. L'activité *Zenes Montre to Talents*, quand on l'avait démarré, on faisait le tour de l'île pour les éliminatoires et on organisait une compétition physique avec des dépenses telles que sono, marquise, podium, transport. Avec la pandémie de la Covid, la phase préliminaire qui est en cours actuellement se fait *online*. Donc, moins de dépenses, parce que nous demandons à tous ceux qui veulent participer de nous envoyer une vidéo à travers WhatsApp, mail, etc. Donc, c'est automatique que c'est moins de dépenses.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Tour you had one?

Mrs Tour: It has already been canvassed.

The Chairperson: Already canvassed. Hon. Uteem and then hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 326, Item 22900.951 - *Smart Youth Programmes (g) National Youth Civic Service*. The amount has actually been halved.

Mr Toussaint: *Same reason.* Quand on avait démarré, les formations se faisaient live dans les centres de jeunesse, et aujourd’hui, Covid oblige, donc, nous n’avons voulu supprimer ces formations ; les formations se font sur les *virtual platforms* du ministère ; donc, moins de dépenses.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 326, Item 31112.407 - *Upgrading of Youth Centres of which (a) Pointe Jerome Residential Youth Centre - Phase II, (b) Lighting of Youth and Recreational Centres, (c) Fencing and Waterproofing of Youth Centres, (d) Other Youth Centres.* May I have a status on all these projects?

Mr Toussaint: Donc, comme le titre indique, M. le président, par exemple, *for Pointe Jerome Residential Youth Centre*, c'est des travaux d'amélioration au niveau du centre de Pointe Jerome. *These are civil works at Pointe Jerome Centre, and for the others, lighting*, c'est quand nous avons justement des problèmes de *lighting* dans les différents centres, *as and when*. Et je sais, de mémoire, que, par exemple, au centre de jeunesse de Rivière du Rempart, on a eu un problème et il faut réparer. Donc, ce sont les réparations qui arrivent *as and when* que nous avons dans les différents *Youth Centres*.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil and then hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 326, Item 31112.407 - *Upgrading of Youth Centres (d) Other Youth Centres.* Est-ce que le ministre pourrait nous informer si le *Floreal Youth Centre* a été inclus dans sa liste? Merci.

Mr Toussaint : Non, il n'y a pas une liste prédéterminée, M. le président. C'est ça que je viens de dire ; il n'y a pas une liste prédéterminée. Ce sont les réparations qui arrivent, auxquelles on a besoin de faire face au fur et à mesure et, donc, on répare. Donc, ce n'est pas qu'on va réparer d'après une liste prédéterminée – Floréal, Malherbes, Mahebourg, etc. C'est *as and when repairs arise*.

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

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 326, Item 28211.044 – *Girls Guide*. Can we know how many girls guide we have?

Mr Toussaint: C'est une contribution que nous faisons à L'Association *Girls Guide*. Donc, c'est juste donner une contribution à Girls Guide, tout comme Scouts Club, St John Ambulance, etc.

The Chairperson: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 326, Item 22900.951 – *Smart Youth Programmes (b) Duke of Edinburgh International Award*. Is the sum catered for youth from Rodrigues as well?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is a national activity – Duke of Edinburgh International Award. *Nous avons 53 jeunes gens et 90 demoiselles de Rodrigues qui bénéficient de ce programme.*

The Chairperson: Any more question on this sub-heading? So, we move to page 327 and 328. No question?

Vote 14-1 Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Rs640,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11:58 p.m.)

Vote 15-1 National Infrastructure was called.

The Chairperson: So, we will start with Sub-Head 15-101: General. You caught my eyes; go on hon. Uteem for now!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Page 333, Item 22030.005 – *Rental of Facilities for Events*. Can the hon. Minister table a list of all expenditure under that item, indicating for which event and how much was spent?

Mr Hurreeram: This provision is for tent, podium and other facilities that are given during religious ceremonies and other activities. I am tabling the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Page 332, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Can I have a breakdown of the way this money has been spent for last year, and for this coming year?

Mr Hurreeram: So, it is provision for the payment of salaries for –

1. One Senior Adviser, Mr Sudheer Kumar Ramnarain, holder of an MBA;
2. Mr Shanmuga Allagapen, Adviser in Information Matters, holder of a Diploma in Journalism and News Writing from London School of Journalism, and
3. One Public Relations Officer, Mr Veer Seerungen, holder of a BSc in Banking and Finance from the University of Mauritius

And their payment is according to PRB.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub and then hon. Armance.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 332, item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can the hon. Minister explain the decrease in the amount budgeted for allowances? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the decrease is based on the trend of expenditure. Let me also tell you that this provision for payment is for acting responsibility, ad hoc duty, entertainment, and car allowance in lieu of duty remission for eligible officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Page 333, Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (For Building Code)*. May we know who was the Consultant and what amount has been spent out of the Rs800,000 that was voted?

Mr Hurreeram: The Consultant for the Building Code, in fact, could not come to Mauritius due to COVID-19, and no money was spent. There is no provision made for the next Financial Year because it is the MSB which is going to work on it, and there is no cost attached.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Tour and then hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Tour: Page 333, Item 26313.010 – *Construction Industry Development Board* to the tune of Rs5 m. Is this amount sufficient to run the Board?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, provision is for funding partly the operation cost of the construction industry. Let me tell you that the CIDB is a revenue generated organisation. So, this Rs5 m. is to top-up whenever it is required. The revised revenue generated last financial year was Rs18 m. and the expenditure was Rs26.5 m. So, we had to top-up.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Page 333, Item 31132.111 – *E-Document Management System*. Can the hon. Minister explain what is it for and what is the progress achieved?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is provision for the implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). The project is ongoing and is expected to be completed by September 2021.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 333, Item 22900.955 – *Gender Mainstreaming. Le ministre peut-il nous informer comment la somme allouée a été dépensée durant la dernière année financière ? Merci.*

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the sum of Rs200,000, which was provided in the current Financial Year, has not been used as the Consultant is expected to submit the final report by October 2021. Then, we will attend to it, of course.

The Chairperson: Time over for this item. Sub-Head 15-102. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 334, Item 31112.433 – *Refurbishment of Emmanuel Anquetil Building*, last year, there was a budget of Rs94 m., and this year, again, Rs63 m. Huge sums of money are being budgeted for this refurbishment. May I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand in relation to this building?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, I should say that the total cumulated expenditure is Rs39.3 m., and this is a pretty old building that requires permanent maintenance, I will say. And it is also a building where people are working in currently. So, I should say here that my Officers are doing the level best to make it a conducive environment for those working in here to have a proper environment around and there has been quite a lot that has been done. Of course, there are expenses of the tune of Rs63 m. that need still to be made in this financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Lobine, then I will go to hon. Osman Mahomed and hon Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 334, under Capital Expenditure, item 31122.829 - *Acquisition of Geotechnical Equipment*. May we know from the hon. Minister the very huge increase in the amount budgeted last year and for the coming financial, from Rs15 m. to Rs150 m.?

Mr Hurreeram: This provision is made to buy geotechnical equipment. In fact, this is being bought from a grant from Japan under the Social and Economic Development Programme.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 333, item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*. May we have the breakdown for this, please?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this provision is for the payment of salary to six Trainee Engineers, one Trainee Architect, one Architect on contract; Mr Nepaul Binesh Lall, holder of an MSC in Architecture; one Geotechnical Expert on contract, Mr Ichikawa, well-known from JICA; one Geologist on contract, Mr Ragoobur Yatindra, holder of an MSC in Geology.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte, then I will go to hon. Uteem and hon. Woochit.

Mrs Mayotte: Page 334, item 22060 – *Maintenance*. Can the Minister explain why the considerable increase in Maintenance?

Mr Hurreeram: So, increase in provision by an amount of Rs9.2 m. to cater for the renewal of licences such as AutoCAD, Procon and STAAD.Pro used by architects, engineers and other technical officers of the Ministry under maintenance of IT equipment. So, this is what explains this huge increase.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo, you do have a point? Hon. Lobine has one.

Mr Lobine: Still page 334, under Capital Expenditure, item 31132.401 - *Computerisation project of Phoenix Technical Division*, there was a project value of Rs38.7 m., only Rs2.3 m. were budgeted for 2020-2021, and for the next Financial Year 2021-2022, there is no budget for that. Can you provide an explanation for that, please?

Mr Hurreeram: It's because that project is completed obviously, so, we will not provide anything more.

The Chairperson: We sufficiently canvassed this item, we will move to *Sub-Head 15-103: Road Construction and Maintenance*. The names, I have noted here, let us say the more senior Members have it then. Hon. Dr. Boolell, you are the most senior Member I see over there.

Dr. Boolell: Very nice of you, Mr Chairperson. Ah, you made my night, thank you very much.

The Chairperson: I will make your day too, I guess.

Dr. Boolell: Page 335, I refer to item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, where Rs7 m. have been earmarked, although for this coming financial year it is going to go down to Rs3 m. Now, can the Minister apprise us as to the number of Studies and Surveys that have been conducted, or would be conducted?

The Chairperson: Minister?

Mr Hurreeram: This provision is for design of a Whole Life Asset Management Strategy and Preparation of Bid Documents for Output and Performance-based Contract.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Nuckcheddy, you have not had one since a long while.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 335, item 31113.401 - *Construction and Upgrading of Bridges, (d) La Croisette New Link Road*, also at page 336, under item – 31113.004, (d) *Constance Bridge at St Remi, Flacq respectively*. Can the hon. Minister please inform the status on this project?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this project will consist of the upgrading of the Constance Bridge Structure over a length of 15.4 metres with footpath of two metres on both sides and the strengthening and repairing of the steel members which are severely corroded. The project value is Rs50 m.; contract not yet awarded, due date is expected to be awarded by April 2022.

The Chairperson: I see a hand raised. Okay, I catch your eyes. Be sweet though; be sweet.

Mr Ameer Meea: Okay. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 335, item 31113.003 - *Construction and Upgrading of Roads (e) De Caen flyover, Port Louis*, with a project value was Rs377 m. For the current year, there was nil amount budgeted, then, the next year, there is an amount of Rs19.4 m. May we know what is this amount?

Mr Hurreeram: Oh my God! This project has already been completed and, as you should probably know as an Accountant, that, normally, you keep what is called the retention money. So, we have to wait for that period of time to check the bridge, and then, next year, we will refund the retention money. *To bizn koner sa Aadil!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Chairperson: Order! Order! It is getting a bit hard for me if everybody is going to talk. From what I see, those who have obtained the least questions, first, hon. Dhunoo, then hon. Armance. I will move to hon. Uteem, hon. Osman Mahomed, then hon. Ittoo.

So, first of all, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 335, under Capital Expenditure, under item *31113.003 - Construction and Upgrading of Roads, (m) La Vigie-La Brasserie Link Road, and (r) Flyover at Wooton* respectively. May we have a status from the Minister, please?

Mr Hurreeram: The status regarding the La Vigie-La Brasserie Link Road, the project has been awarded to general construction. The contractual date is February 2021 and, as at date, the project status is 5% completed. So, it is mostly the mobilisation that has been done on the field. Regarding (r) Flyover at Wooton, this project value is Rs390 m., it has not been awarded yet. We are expecting this to start in February 2022.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 335, item *31113.003 - Construction and Upgrading of Roads (b) Pointe aux Sables Road at Petit Verger*. Can the hon. Minister confirm that the project has been completed completely, that it is fully operational and that it has been handed over by the contractor?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, this project has been completed. The contractor was Gamma Civic Ltd. The starting date was 11 February 2019; completion date was 10 February 2020. It is completed, but I know where you are coming. There is another leg that needs to be completed by the NDU.

Mr Armance: And the handing over?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, sure, it has been handed over.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: At page 336, item *31113.003 - Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Roads (v) - Motorway M4 Phase 2 from Pont Blanc to Forbach (Dual Carriage Way)*, the project value is Rs4.3 billion, it is a huge project, so, may I know where matters stand? Whether tender documents have been launched?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this project ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Hurreeram: This project will consist of the construction of a dual carriage way over a length of approximately 18 KM between Pont Blanc to Forbach on the Motorway. The expected date to start is May 2022.

Preparation of pre-qualification documents is in progress.

The Chairperson: Thereafter, with hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: At page 335, under item *31113.003 - Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Roads*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether these roads that are listed in there have consulted the Korea Expressway Corporation because I do not quite see the consultancy fee that has been paid? *Pa badine la ein, laisse li reponn.*

Mr Hurreeram: I think, Mr Chairperson, we are looking on the annotation of the Budget. We are not discussing any policy matters.

The Chairperson: Sure!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Is Korea Expressway Corporation consultant on any of these projects and, if so, I want to know the list of the projects and the sum paid to the Korea Expressway Corporation?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, the only place where I know the KEC is working is the Road Decongestion Programme on A1-M1 at Jumbo. That is all.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 335, under item *31113.003 - Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Roads (p) - Bois Cheri Bypass*, project value of Rs236 m., can we have an update on the project and specifics and whether the contractor has been allocated? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this provision is for the advance payment on signing of contract. Project will start from Grand Bassin Road B88 and will provide an alternative route to Savanne Road A9 and the project value is Rs236 m., contract not yet awarded, expected date to start is May 2022. The status of the project is at design stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 336 under item *31113.003 - Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Roads (u) – Hermitage Bypass*, there is a project value of Rs250 m. allocated. May we know when this project will start, please?

Mr Hurreeram: I think it is also good to know, Mr Chairperson, that this project go along with the opening of the Wholesale Market at Wooton to ease the traffic from that side of the island, from all those coming from the North and the East. It is a road that will come from Côte d'Or to Aurea Morcellement over a length of 2 km; thereafter, a bypass of 1.5 km will be constructed to join the B6 Road at Belle Rive. Provision has been made in Financial Year 2022-2023, studies are being carried out.

The Chairperson: Last question. Hon. Kushal Lobine! Canvassed? No no, sorry, we listened to you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Hurreeram: *Oui, bizin pose mwa enn question la.*

The Chairperson: Last question!

Mr Ramful: Item *31113.004 - Other Structures – Construction and Upgrading of Bridges (c)- Cavendish Bridge at Ville Noire (Consultancy)*, I can see that a sum of Rs15 m. has been earmarked and then the consultant, has he been appointed yet?

Mr Hurreeram: In fact, this sum of Rs15 m. is to appoint a consultant. Eventually, as you know, the existing Cavendish Bridge is quite narrow and it being a Heritage, we cannot really do much with it. So, the RDA is actually studying the possibilities of having another road to link Mahebourg through Ville Noire to Grand Bel Air/Petit Bel Air. This Rs15 m. is for the studies.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much. Next sub-heading.

(Interruptions)

Mr Hurreeram: *Nou al fer ouvertir ensam.*

The Chairperson: Next sub-heading, 15-104. No hand raised! I will move. Final, human resource: pages 338, 339, 340, 341, 342. No hand raised!

Vote 15-1 National Infrastructure (Rs4,100,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(00.22 a.m.)

Vote 15-2 National Development Unit was called.

The Chairperson: I will see that everybody will have a chance to ask one question at least. I will take it from my right and proceed further. Everybody will have a chance. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 344, Item 26323.144 - *Extra Budgetary Units - Land Drainage Authority of which (b) Land Drainage Master Plan*, I can see that there was budget of Rs45 m. last year. Almost the same figure for this year, may I know from the hon. Minister when will the Land Drainage Master Plan be ready and made available?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, we have already had a first draft of the Master Plan in February this year and the final report is expected September this year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. I will go to hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 344, Item 31113.003 *Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Roads & 31113.045 Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, which pertains to construction and upgrading of roads and upgrading amenities, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, since the sum is quite substantial about half a billion rupees, how does the NDU go about procuring the services of these contractors? Is it through tender exercise, through district contractor? I would like to be enlightened on this.

Mr Hurreeram: So, there is a mixture of both, Mr Chairperson. The NDU has framework contractors which each district has their own set of framework contractors to whom contracts are being allocated for drains and tarring, resurfacing and all. And then, for the other big contract, we also go for tender exercise through the CPB.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell! Hon. Boolell is the only one left on this side.

Dr. Boolell: Page 344 Minister, Item 26313

Mr Hurreeram: Say again. Item?

Dr. Boolell: Item 31113.015 – *Other Structures - Construction and Upgrading of Drains*, why is it that there is no provision for this?

The Chairperson: You want the question repeated? Repeat the question, please.

Dr. Boolell: Yes, 31113.015 - *Construction and Upgrading of Drains*. Why is there no provision?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes. Because projects are financed under the COVID- 19 Projects Development Fund to the tune of Rs11.7 billion over the next three years for the implementation of around 1500 drain projects. So, it is under COVID-19.

Dr. Boolell: The Minister of Finance is vetting the investment.

Mr Hurreeram: Yes.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: It is on page 343, Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is Rs28 m. worth of rent being paid. May I know from the hon. Minister whether all the premises are currently occupied because that has been the subject of an adverse comment by the Director of Audit?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, yes. We are currently renting in the Citadelle Mall, where the NDU headquarters are and we have CAB Central Flacq, CAB Mahebourg, CAB Rose-Hill and CAB Beau-Bassin which are being rented. So, yes they are all fully occupied. Maybe at that point in time, if I am not mistaken, the LDA premises were not yet occupied because it was being furnished. So, maybe, that could have been. Otherwise, all our premises are well-occupied.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, on the same page 343, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, an amount of Rs625,000. May we have the details of it?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes. This provision has been made for the payment of an all-inclusive allowance to two trainee-engineers to assist Project Managers and Project Officers with regard to infrastructural projects.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 344. Can the hon. Minister with regard to Item 31113.003 – *Construction and upgrading of Roads* and Item 31113.045 – *Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, provide a detailed list that could be tabled to the House, a breakdown as per Constituency? Is it possible?

Mr Hurreeram: As you surely know, we are now debating this Budget. Let the sum be available to us. Obviously, all the PPS here have a full list of projects. So, once this is voted, then we will sort out what are our priorities, then we may table.

An hon. Member: At CAB, Vacoas.

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, we will welcome you.

The Chairperson: Okay. I see these two hon. ladies left, hon. Mrs Tour first, then hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte. Then I think everybody will have a chance for a last question as well as you.

Mrs Tour: At page 344, under item *26313.144 – Land Drainage Authority*, can the hon. Minister explain the increase of the operating costs?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes. In fact, there has been an increase in the Operating costs as the Minister of Finance said during the Budget Speech that the Drain Project will now be spearheaded by the LDA. So, we are here building capacity within the LDA to be able to spearhead those projects. Therefore, there are 37 additional posts to empower the LDA with the necessary technical manpower to fulfil its role. The additional posts include –

- (a) 10 Civil Engineers;
- (b) 1 Land Surveyor;
- (c) 1 Hydraulic Modeller ;
- (d) 10 Land Drainage Inspectors;
- (e) 1 Instructural Engineer, and
- (f) 12 other Support Staff and other administrative costs.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte now.

Mrs Mayotte: Yes, page 344, Item *31113.015 – Construction and Upgrading of Drains*. I would like to know whether Budget has been provided to LDA for the maintenance of drains.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the budgetary provision for cleaning, maintenance of drains has been provided under the National Climate and Environment Fund which lies with my colleague, the hon. Kavi Ramano.

The Chairperson: Thank you. The two ladies at the end. We have four gentlemen. I will go by the youngest. Hon. Dhunoo, I think, is the youngest.

Mr Dhunoo: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 344, under item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, a budget of Rs500,000 was earmarked last year and now it has nearly increased by 5 times to Rs2.5 m. Can we have an explanation from the Minister?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is the effect of the New Normal. This increase in provision is for the purchase of additional IT equipment for implementation of Work from Home policy.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Then, older than hon. Dhunoo, appears to be hon. Ittoo.

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 344, under Capital Expenditure, I see...

Mr Hurreeram: Item?

Mr Ittoo: Item 26323.144 – *Land Drainage Authority*. An amount of Rs4.7m. Can we know what this amount is for please?

Mr Hurreeram: Provision has been made for the acquisition of two additional vehicles, estimated at Rs2 m. each and one drone for an estimated amount of Rs700,000 for the monitoring of cleaning and desilting of rivers. So, now, we will go by drones.

The Chairperson: Young at heart is hon. Nuckcheddy.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Can I have two questions at a go?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, have one!

Mr Nuckcheddy: Yes or no?

The Chairperson: One question!

Mr Nuckcheddy: At page 344, under item 31113.003- *Construction and Upgrading of Roads* and 31113.045 – *Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, can the hon. Minister please advise if the sums allocated include only the construction costs or other costs like acquisition of land where required?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, in fact, this sum will also include, yes, maybe acquisition also and surveys wherever required.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bodha, please.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson: The very last item on page 344 – 31132.111 – *E-Document Management System*. May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten us as to where the project is so far? The Electronic Document Management System.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, in fact, provision has been made for an introduction of the EDMS where this lies. I need help from my officers. It is at initial stage. A consultant is yet to be appointed.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Vote 15-2 National Development Unit (Rs748,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Dr. Padayachy: Sir, I beg to move that we do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Gobin seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Thank you very much. Have a safe trip back home!

At 00.35 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 11.30 a.m.