



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 03 NOVEMBER 2020

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(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
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
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
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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 Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Mohammad Zahid Nazurally
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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 32 of 2020

Sitting of Tuesday 03 November 2020

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President

The Annual Reports 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 of the Ombudsperson for Children.
(In Original)

B. Office of Mr Speaker

The Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission on a review of the boundaries of the Constituencies 2020.

C. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity

(a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills (In Original):

- (i) The Climate Change Bill (No. XIV of 2020); and
- (ii) The Veterinary Council Bill (No. XV of 2020)

(b) The Audited Financial Statements of the Discharged Persons' Committee for the Year ended 30 June 2019.

D. Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology

- (a) The Annual Report of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority for the 18 months' period ending 30 June 2017.
- (b) The Annual Reports of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre Trust Fund for the year 2006 to 2009 and for the year ending 31 December 2012. (In Original)
- (c) The Education (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 234 of 2020)

E. Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management

- (a) The District Council of Black River (Traffic Centre) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 194 of 2020)

- (b) The District Council of Moka (Amendment) (Fair) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 203 of 2020)
- (c) The District Council of Moka (Amendment No. 2) (Fair) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 204 of 2020)
- (d) The City of Council of Port Louis (Streets and Squares) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 213 of 2020)
- (e) The Village Council Elections (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 246 of 2020)
- (f) The District Council of Rivière du Rempart Market/Fairs Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 261 of 2020)

F. Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail

- (a) The National Land Transport Authority (Appeal Committee) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 216 of 2020)
- (b) The Road Traffic (Conduct of Passengers) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 218 of 2020)
- (c) The Light Rail (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 228 of 2020)
- (d) The Road Traffic (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 229 of 2020)

G. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

- (a) The Financial Statements of the Mauritius Ex-Services Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2019.
- (b) The Companies (Payment of Fees to Registrar) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 207 of 2020)
- (c) The Economic Development Board (Smart City Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 209 of 2020)
- (d) The Financial Statements of the Mauritius Ex-Services Trust Fund (MESTF) for the year ending 30 June 2019.

- (e) Loan Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the African Development Bank (COVID-19 Crisis Response Budget Support Program). (In Original)
- (f) The Annual Report of the Economic Development Board for the 18 months ending 30 June 2019.
- (g) Credit Facility Agreement dated as of 27th July 2020 between *Agence Française de Développement* the Lender and The Republic of Mauritius The borrower. (In Original)
- (h) The Companies (Payment of Fees to Registrar) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 217 of 2020)
- (i) *Virement* (Contingencies) Warrant - Quarter 4 (April – June 2020): Nos. 9 and 10. (In Original)
- (j) *Virement* Warrant - Quarter 4 (April – June 2020): Nos. 23, 25-78, 80-85, 87-93 and Retrospective *Virement* Warrant Nos. 94-98. (In Original)
- (k) *Virement* Certificates – Quarter 4 (April – June 2020):

Vote/Sub-Head (Certificates Nos.): 1-1(5-7), 1-2(5,7), 1-5(4-18), 1-6(4,6), 1-7(7), 1-8(1,2), 1-9(3-5), 1-10(5-8), 1-12(3), 1-15(5-7), 2-101(4,8), 2-103(6, 9-11), 2-106(6-8), 2-107(4-8), 2-108(1-3, 5, 6), 2-2(3-10), 2-4(2-11), 2-6(2,6), 2-7(9, 11-13, 15A, 16), 2-9(1-5), 2-13(1-4), 3-1(11-20, 22-25), 4-1(4), 4-2(3), 4-3(1), 4-4(5), 4-5(3-14), 5-1(1-6), 5-3(4-8), 5-4(1), 6-1(7-9), 7-1(8-22, 24-29), 7-2(1-3, 5, 6), 7-3(3-10), 8-1(6-9), 11-1(7-11), 12-1(4-8, 8A, 9, 11, 12), 12-2(11-17), 12-3(4-7), 14-1(8, 9A, 10-15, 2-9), 15-1(7), 15-4(4-6), 17-1(6-10), 20-1(3), 21-1(3-11), 22-1(3), 24-1(4-6) and 25-1(17). (In Original)
- (l) *Virement* (Contingencies) Warrant - Quarter 1 (July – September 2020): Nos.1 to 3. (In Original)
- (m) *Virement* Warrant – Quarter 1 (July – September 2020): Nos. 1 to 8. (In Original)
- (n) *Virement* Certificates – Quarter 1 (July – September 2020):

Vote/Sub-Head (Certificates Nos): 1-5(1), 1-9(1), 2-101(1), 2-3(1), 3-1(2), 4-1(1), 5- 1(1), 5-4(1,2), 16-1(1,2), 19-1(1,2), 19-103(1), 21-1(1,2) and 26-1(1).

(In Original)

- (o) Carry-Over Warrant - Quarter 4 (April – June 2020): Nos. 1 to 3. (In Original)
- (p) The Income Tax (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 231 of 2020)
- (q) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 232 of 2020)
- (r) The Public Procurement (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 233 of 2020)
- (s) The Customs (Movement Certificate EUR 1) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 241 of 2020)
- (t) The Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 242 of 2020)
- (u) The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 243 of 2020)
- (v) The Value Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 244 of 2020)
- (w) The Public Procurement (Amendment of Schedule) (No.3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 245 of 2020)
- (x) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 247 of 2020)
- (y) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 248 of 2020)
- (z) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 249 of 2020)
- (aa) The Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 251 of 2020)

- (bb) The Income Tax (Contributions to Film Promotion Fund) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 252 of 2020)
- (cc) The Value Added Tax (Contributions to Film Promotion Fund) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 253 of 2020)
- (dd) The Public Procurement (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 256 of 2020)
- (ee) The Build Operate Transfer Projects (Prescribed Threshold) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 257 of 2020)
- (ff) The Public-Private Partnership (Prescribed Threshold) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 258 of 2020)
- (gg) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 259 of 2020)
- (hh) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 260 of 2020)

H. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

- (a) The Annual Report 2017-2018 of the Central Electricity Board.
- (b) The Annual Report 2017-2018 of the wastewater Management Authority.
- (c) The Annual Report 2017-2018 of the Utility Regulatory Authority (URA).

I. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity

- (a) The National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 198 of 2020)
- (b) The National Pensions (Claims and Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 199 of 2020)
- (c) The National Pensions (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 200 of 2020)
- (d) The National Pensions (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.
(Government Notice No. 201 of 2020)

- (e) The National Pensions (Non-Contributory Benefits) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 202 of 2020)
- (f) The National Pensions (Claims and Payment) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 255 of 2020)
- (g) The *Contibution Sociale Généralisée* Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 214 of 2020)
- (h) The Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the National Pensions Fund for the year ended 30 June 2017.
- (i) The Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the National Savings Fund for the year ended 30 June 2017.

J. Ministry of Industrial Development, SME's and Cooperatives

The Jewellery (Dealer's Registration and Transactions) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Gazette No.220 of 2020)

K. Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

The Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 197 of 2020)

L. Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance

- (a) The Financial Services (Administrative Penalties) (Amendment) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 210 of 2020)
- (b) The Financial Services (Investment Banking) (Amendment) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 211 of 2020)
- (c) The Securities (Licensing) (Amendment) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 212 of 2020)
- (d) The Annual Report 2018/2019 of the Financial Reporting Council.
- (e) The Financial Reporting Council (Licensing of Auditors) (Amendment) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 222 of 2020)
- (f) The Financial Reporting Council (Registration of Audit Firm) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 223 of 2020)

- (g) The Financial Reporting Council (Penalty) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 224 of 2020)
- (h) The Financial Services (Administrative Penalties) (Amendment No. 2) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 263 of 2020)
- (i) The Insurance (Risk Management) (Amendment) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 264 of 2020)
- (j) The Financial Services (Exemption from Approval of Controllers and Beneficial Owners) (Revocation) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 265 of 2020)
- (k) The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) (Amendment No. 4) Rules 2020. (Government Notice No. 266 of 2020)

M. Attorney General

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security

- (a) The Annual Report of the Mauritius Meat Authority for the year ended 30 June 2019.
- (b) The Annual Report and Accounts of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority for the period ending 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.
- (c) The Annual Report 2017-2018 of the Sugar Industry Fund Board.
- (d) The Sugar Investment Trust (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 219 of 2020)
- (e) The Revision of Laws (Revised Subsidiary Legislation of Mauritius) (Volumes 1 to 9) (Supplement – Issue 5) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 221 of 2020)
- (f) The Law Officers (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 268 of 2020)

N. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 21) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 195 of 2020)

- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 22) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 196 of 2020)
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 23) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 205 of 2020)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 24) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 206 of 2020)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.25) Regulations 2020 (Government Notice No. 238 of 2020)
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.26) Regulations 2020 (Government Notice No. 239 of 2020)
- (g) The Consumer Protection (Fixed Penalty Notice) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 240 of 2020)
- (h) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 27) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 250 of 2020)
- (i) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 28) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 262 of 2020)

O. Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development

- (a) The Construction Industry Development Board (Registration of Consultants and Contractors) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 192 of 2020)
- (b) The Construction Industry Development Board (Appeal Fee) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 193 of 2020)

- (c) The Construction Industry Development Board (Registration of Consultants and Contractors) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 235 of 2020)

P. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation

The Annual Report 2017-2018 of the Mauritius Research Council.

Q. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training

- (a) The Employment Relations (Extension of Time) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 215 of 2020)
- (b) The Annual Report 2018/2019 of the Human Resource Development Council.
- (c) The Workers' Rights (Working from Home) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 225 of 2020)
- (d) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 226 of 2020)
- (e) The Annual Reports 2014, 2015 and 2016-2017 of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD).

R. Ministry of Health and Wellness

- (a) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 208 of 2020)
- (b) The Financial Statements of the Mauritius Institute of Health for the year ended 30 June 2019.
- (c) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 227 of 2020)
- (d) The Medical Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 237 of 2020)
- (e) The Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 254 of 2020)
- (f) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 267 of 2020)

S. Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping

The Fisheries and Marine Resources (Extension of Net Fishing Season) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 230 of 2020)

T. Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare

The Audited Financial Statements and Annual Reports for the 18-month period ended 30 June 2017 and for the year ended 30 June 2018 of the National Children's Council.

(In Original)

U. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

(a) The Annual Reports 2014, 2015 and 2016-2017 of the Creole Speaking Union.

(b) The Annual Report of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the period January 2016 to June 2017.

(c) The Copyright (Fees) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 236 of 2020)

V. Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Public Officers' Welfare Council for the period July 2018 to June 2019.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ANGUS ROAD, VACOAS - IMMOVEABLE PROPERTIES - ACQUISITION

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the acquisition of immoveable properties at Angus Road, Vacoas, in May and June 2008, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to whether the Commission is in presence of an alleged complaint of corruption in relation thereto and, if so, indicate –
 - (i) the nature thereof, and
 - (ii) whether an investigation has been initiated thereinto and, if so, when, indicating when same is expected to be completed, and
- (b) state when mutual legal assistance with the United Kingdom was sought in relation thereto, indicating where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Office has contacted the ICAC in relation to the Private Notice Question of the Leader of the Opposition.

ICAC has informed that there is an ongoing investigation into the matter raised in the PNQ. ICAC's stand is as follows –

- (i) further information cannot be divulged in accordance with section 81(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002, which reads as follows –

“No member of the Board or officer, shall, except in accordance with this Act, or as otherwise authorized by law – divulge the source of such information or the identity of any informer or the maker, writer or issuer of a report given to the Corruption Investigation Division.”
- (ii) in line with the provisions of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly relating to “Questions to Ministers” and “Contents of Questions”, there is no Ministerial responsibility to answer the question as it relates to operational issues pertaining to the ICAC, and

- (iii) by virtue of section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, no information relating to any investigation can be divulged and the exception provided for under the law would not apply to Parliamentary Questions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, since the information requested also relates to the ongoing investigation by the ICAC, such information cannot be divulged by virtue of the provisions of section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, I thought the Prime Minister was like Caesar's wife, above any suspicion. Is he aware that he made a statement to the Press that he was willing to disclose any information in respect of this alleged corrupt practice?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I did make such a statement and you will just have to wait and see for yourself.

Dr. Boolell: Amazing Prime Minister! Is he aware that we have been waiting in relation to this case since 2011, almost nine years?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware if you have been waiting since 2011, as you said. No?

Dr. Boolell: Am I to understand the Prime Minister is chickened out? Is he scared?

The Prime Minister: Far from that!

Dr. Boolell: Is he culpable of his silence? Am I to understand that this Prime Minister is culpable of his silence and, therefore, is guilty of impropriety, of corrupt practices?

The Prime Minister: Not at all!

Mr Speaker: Don't impute motives, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: Not at all and I wish, if you have the courage and you are serious and you are not a *lâche*, that you would say that outside, not here.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, I have always taken up his challenge. In fact, can I remind him, if he is...

Mr Speaker: Put your question, please!

Dr. Boolell: I am coming. Hold your horse! Hold your horse Mr! Is he aware that one of his former Ministers disclosed in public that this is a case of alleged corrupt practices, involving one Mr Loganaden Govinden?

Mr Speaker: Don't mention names in questions!

The Prime Minister: He also will have to wait and see what will happen to him.

Dr. Boolell: It is amazing! He is taking more than 10 years.

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Dr. Boolell: And now he is saying to give him more time. If he is above suspicion, a Prime Minister dignified of the name, is he aware that it is up to him now to disclose anything and everything in relation to this alleged case and why is he taking so long?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have answered. I have said that...

Mr Speaker: Don't repeat your question, Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: I am not repeating my question. It is a question of more than Rs20 m...

Mr Speaker: Come with a new question!

Dr. Boolell: ...which allegedly has been involved in an illegal transaction, and this *hors de la vue du notaire*. Is he aware of this?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said in my reply that my Office has contacted ICAC and ICAC has stated that there is an ongoing inquiry. I cannot, of course, say more than what has been provided to me by ICAC.

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki sanela kwrar dan sa ICAC la!*

Mr Speaker: New supplementary question!

The Prime Minister: This is the law!

Dr. Boolell: New supplementary question.

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki sanela kwrar dan sa ICAC la!*

Mr Speaker: Silence here!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki sanela kwrar dan sa ICAC la!*

Mr Speaker: Silence here! No crosstalking! Hon. Bhagwan, last warning!

Dr. Boolell: Let me...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last warning!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Let me remind him. Is he aware of what advice...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! I gave you a last warning and you are insisting. Please withdraw from the Chamber!

(Interruptions)

I do not answer questions; I give orders!

(Interruptions)

I have already ordered!

Mr Bhagwan: You are protecting the Prime Minister! What have I said? Have you listened to what I said?

Mr Speaker: I have already ordered you out! Second time!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, last time, third warning!

Mr Bhagwan: You are protecting the Prime Minister!

Mr Speaker: I am naming you. I suspend the sitting for 10 minutes.

At 11.46 a.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.06 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister! Motion!

MOTIONS – S.O. 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3) , to take the time of the House for urgent business.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

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

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, I beg to move that the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's and the next two Sittings.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is suspended. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the Prime Minister aware that the case of alleged corruption in relation to properties acquired in Angus Road was brought against him nine years ago, and why is it that up to now ICAC is yet to conclude its findings?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already answered!

Mr Speaker: Next supplementary question!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Prime Minister aware that the nation wants him to come clean and to put an end to his culpable silence?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Member of the principle that has always applied with regard to questions put whenever there has been an ongoing inquiry by ICAC. At the Sitting of 18 October 2011, the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger, had addressed a PNQ to the then hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, on a series of cases; Medpoint, Infinity, Bank of Mauritius, and so on. And the answer that was given by the then Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, is that, and I quote part of the answer because I do not want to go into the lengthy answer -

“(...) according to section 81 of the Act, all Board members and officers of the ICAC are required to take an oath of secrecy and they have a duty to maintain the confidentiality of, and not divulge, any official information that becomes known to them, except as provided under that section.”

And he further stated, and I quote –

“It is also worth pointing out that, by virtue of section 81(4) of the Act, it is open to the Director General of ICAC to disclose, for the purpose of publication in the Press, such information he considers necessary in the public interest. I am sure the House shares the view that the publication of any information by ICAC that could be prejudicial to an ongoing inquiry is not envisaged by that section.”

A series of questions were put. In July 2007, and this one, Mr Speaker, Sir, was a question that was put seeking information as to the number of cases reported since July 2007 to date. Number of cases; not even going on the merit and the substance! Number of cases! The hon. Minister under the Labour Government replied at that time, and I quote –

“I am informed that section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act imposes restrictions on the disclosure of information by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.”

So, those principles applied at the time when questions were being put when the Labour Party was in Government, when Dr. Navin Ramgoolam was Prime Minister and, today, should there be different principles, and should different laws be applying?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister is game for a laugh. Is he aware that he is the one who brought an amendment to section 18 of the Anti-money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act and it is precisely the reply that he has given that has prompted our being blacklisted by the EU. Can I ask the Prime Minister why we have had to bring an amendment to section 18 of the FIAMLA? I know he will not reply to that because he is guilty of impropriety.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you can't express your opinion! Withdraw that word 'guilty'.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

Dr. Boolell: I withdraw under protest.

Mr Speaker: No protest; unconditionally, you withdraw.

Dr. Boolell: Okay, I withdraw. Can I put the question?

Mr Speaker: On a point of order!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition, section 40 (5) of the Standing Orders says as follows –

“The conduct of (...) Members of the Assembly (...) shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion moved for that purpose; and in any (...) question to a Minister (...) reference to the conduct of the persons aforesaid shall be out of order.”

Dr. Boolell: The conduct is controversial. Can I ask the Prime Minister why was the request made to withdraw the mutual legal assistance and will he state in this House whether there was any pressure being borne upon the then Attorney General?

The Prime Minister: Well, he is again going round and round in circles, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have stated that this is a matter which is being investigated by ICAC and, therefore, I have not been provided with such information. So, I cannot say more than that.

Dr. Boolell: As of now, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mr L. G., Loganaden Govinden ...

Mr Speaker: Again, you don't have to mention names! This is the second time; second warning!

Dr. Boolell: Mr L. G. has not been called by ICAC. Can I ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware that Mr L. G. made acquisition of that property, which allegedly the deed of sale was transferred to relatives of the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall again refer to the information that has been provided by ICAC, and I stand by the answer that I gave in this National Assembly.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I will remind you, upon the point of order raised by hon. Ganoo, if this thing is of personal character, reflecting character and conduct of hon. Member in this House, then you have to come with a substantive motion. I allow you for direct questions related to your main question.

Dr. Boolell: Questions which I have put so far are directly related.

Mr Speaker: You don't comment! I rule!

Dr. Boolell: I am saying it.

Mr Speaker: You put questions and I rule!

Dr. Boolell: I will put my questions, which are highly relevant.

Mr Speaker: Don't comment! Second time! And let it be the last time that you comment after the Speaker. Go ahead!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me ask the Prime Minister when the then Prime Minister decided to appoint the current Director of ICAC, did he disclose to the then Prime Minister that there was a case before the ICAC to which he was party to?

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to do with this.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, these are things of personal character and conduct outside official and public work. So, reframe your questions according to official and public work.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Prime Minister whether the person who bears the name of L. G. is a personal friend of his?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, don't look for information! You are fishing for information! In public interest, ask your question.

Dr. Boolell: I will in the name of public interest; whether it is one and the same person who is the Agent Commissioner for Heinemann which supplies duty free goods to our airport?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware.

Mr Speaker: You are putting the same question again. I don't know if the Prime Minister has the answer or if he wishes to answer to that.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the Prime Minister whether it is the one and the same person who credited more than Rs20 m...

(Interruptions)

... in an account in UK in relation to acquisition of property, whose sale of deed was then transferred to the minors of the Prime Minister?

Mr Speaker: Again, Leader of the Opposition, this is not in his official or public capacity.

Dr. Boolell: In the light...

Mr Speaker: Ask questions to the Prime Minister!

Dr. Boolell: In the light of the many questions which I have put...

Mr Speaker: Listen to my guidance! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you can ask questions related to the main question in the official and public capacity of the Prime Minister.

Dr. Boolell: Can I then ask the Prime Minister, in the interest not only of himself but of the nation, that ICAC be asked, be called upon to expedite? Because an institution which today has no respect, which has lost its credibility...

Mr Speaker: This is your personal opinion!

Dr. Boolell: ...it's largely due to his indecision.

Mr Speaker: This is your personal opinion!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, this...

Mr Speaker: Ask questions, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: I will ask the Prime Minister - in the light of grave accusation against him and if he does not want to continue being culpable and to remain silent, can I ask him, as a responsible person, to step down and allow this inquiry?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition, if I follow his reasoning that I should step down and let ICAC conduct an enquiry, that there is also a case called Sun Tan, wherein there has been an allegation of conflict of interest against the DPP. Should the DPP then, if I follow that reasoning, step down and allow the ICAC...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: ... to conduct an inquiry?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: You should ask...

Mr Speaker: On both sides of the House, order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order on both sides of the House! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order on both sides of the House! Please, continue!

The Prime Minister: And being in a position which is protected by the Constitution, and being totally independent, I think the standard is even more than that of Caesar's wife! So, I hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition replicates the example that he has been saying today and addresses it to the DPP also.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Dr. Boolell: Can I, Mr Speaker, tell the Prime Minister that it's indecent and as a Prime Minister who has been elected by only 27% of the...

Mr Speaker: Don't impute motives!

Dr. Boolell: ...he does not have...

Mr Speaker: Don't! Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: ...*l'Opposition! Twa, komien tone ganie twa?*

Mr Speaker: Don't impute motives!

Dr. Boolell: I am not imputing motives. I am simply saying the truth, and the truth hurts!

(Interruptions)

And the truth hurts. We have...

Mr Speaker: Can you withdraw the word 'indecent'?

Dr. Boolell: We have in this country a Prime Minister who is not dignified.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you used the word 'indecent'. Can you withdraw that word?

Dr. Boolell: Okay, I withdraw the word 'indecent', but, then, the nation has already made up its judgment.

Mr Speaker: No, unconditionally. Unconditionally, you withdraw the word 'indecent'.

Dr. Boolell: I have already withdrawn the word 'indecent'.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Continue with your question!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, can I ask the Prime Minister - and he owes it to the nation. He has to tell us whether as a Prime Minister, why is it that up to now, he has not been convened to depone before or to appear before the ICAC.

Mr Speaker: The question is not related...

Dr. Boolell: It is relevant.

Mr Speaker: ...to the main question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: The question is relevant!

Mr Speaker: You are drifting away from the main question.

Dr. Boolell: I am not drifting away.

The Prime Minister: Well, I can answer, Mr Speaker, Sir because I am not ICAC. So, it is for ICAC to convene.

Dr. Boolell: ICAC! Can I ask the Prime Minister why is it - and I come back to what I stated earlier - that he failed to disclose his relationship to the person who bears the initials L. G.? Why is it that he failed to disclose his personal relationship? And it is up to him to disclose that. He cannot forever hide...

Mr Speaker: This question relates to character and conduct of hon. Members. I have already told you, hon. Leader of the Opposition, if you want to come with a substantive motion, then we will entertain it. Change your question!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, first of all, the Prime Minister refused to answer questions, saying that the inquiry is being conducted by ICAC, and this inquiry has been going on for more than nine years.

Mr Speaker: You are repeating yourself, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: I am not repeating; I am stating facts.

Mr Speaker: Change question!

Dr. Boolell: The question is, as a dignified Prime Minister, because he does not carry that name of a dignified Prime Minister...

The Prime Minister: As a dignified...

Mr Speaker: Can you withdraw that? You are going too far, hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is your personal opinion! Withdraw that word, that expression also!

(Interruptions)

Can you withdraw that, please?

Dr. Boolell: Withdraw what?

Mr Speaker: The Prime Minister does not carry the weight of a Prime Minister or whatever you said!

Dr. Boolell: So, what is there to withdraw?

The Prime Minister: It is not dignified...

Dr. Boolell: What is there to withdraw?

The Prime Minister: Are you dignified?

Dr. Boolell: What is there to withdraw? You have to be specific and tell me what is it that I have to withdraw.

Mr Speaker: You have already withdrawn it?

Dr. Boolell: No, but you have to tell me what is it that I have to withdraw!

Mr Speaker: You said the Prime Minister does not whatever and dignified...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: What do you want me to withdraw?

Mr Speaker: I suspend the sitting. And come to my Office, we will know what the words were.

At 12.23 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.36 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I reviewed the record and I could see that sentence: “as a dignified Prime Minister, because he does not carry that name of a dignified Prime Minister.”

You, therefore, withdraw unconditionally, without any explanation!

Dr. Boolell: You do not have to shout, but I will withdraw.

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, my ruling is the following: I have already stated earlier that you cannot reflect upon the character and conduct of the hon. Prime Minister unless you come by way of a substantive motion to that effect, in accordance with the provision of Standing Order 40(5). Furthermore, in reply to your Private Notice Question, the hon. Prime Minister had already stated the reasons as to why he cannot legally provide the information requested by you in the PNQ.

In this connection, I wish to draw your attention to Standing Order 25(4), according to which -

“(4) An answer to a question cannot be insisted upon if the answer is refused by the Minister.”

Nevertheless, I have allowed you enough latitude to put general questions not related to the conduct of the hon. Prime Minister. However, considering that some of your supplementary questions have a direct bearing on the conduct of the hon. Prime Minister and others cannot be replied by the hon. Prime Minister for reasons he has stated earlier, I deem it appropriate that I am not entertaining other supplementary questions on this Private Notice Question. We will now move to questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two more supplementary questions and I think it will be dignified to allow me to carry on with these two supplementary questions.

Mr Speaker: Clerk, announce Prime Minister’s Question Time!

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

PORT LOUIS HARBOUR - LOGISTICS

(No. B/668) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to Port logistics at the Port Louis Harbour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain

from the Mauritius Ports Authority, information as to whether the productivity, performance and efficiency of the port operations are being impacted upon due to faulty and lack of equipment and if so, indicate the remedial actions being envisaged.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, the Mauritius Ports Authority is established under the Ports Act 1998 to regulate and control the entry of vessels in the Port, their stay, movements, operations in and departure from the Port, the loading, unloading and storage of cargo and containers, amongst others.

Productivity, Port performance and efficiency are measured by the quality of services provided in respect of berthing and unberthing of vessels, loading and unloading of cargo and are not impaired by any faulty equipment which is subject to maintenance and remedial repair.

The Mauritius Ports Authority provides tugs services for the manoeuvring of vessels within the Port area. Presently, the Authority has a fleet of three big tugs with Bollard Pull capacity ranging from 45 tonnes to 79 tonnes and four small tugs with Bollard Pull capacity of 12 tonnes. One big and one small tugs are undergoing maintenance and repairs. These tugs are expected to be back in operation by December 2020.

The Mauritius Ports Authority has appointed Messrs Keel Marine Ltd as Consultant in February 2020, to undertake a Technical Audit of its fleet of tugs, assess the Marine Engineering Unit in terms of adequacy of manpower and capability and prepare a replacement plan, including specifications for the tugs as larger vessels of capacity above 13,000 TEUs are now calling at Port Louis.

The Consultants have recommended that the Mauritius Ports Authority operates a fleet of four big tugs and four small tugs to ensure smooth operations and a proper maintenance plan. Accordingly, it is planned to procure within the next two years two big tugs to replace the oldest one and to reinstate the fleet to four big tugs and four small tugs to replace the existing ones.

However, given the fact that the new big tugs would be commissioned in more than 15 months' time, a big tug of 60 tonnes Bollard Pull capacity is being chartered on lease for a period of two years and is expected to be in operation by mid-November 2020.

As regards container handling equipment, there are currently three latest generation Super Post Panamax Cranes, five Post Panamax Cranes, sixteen Rubber Tyred Gantry Cranes and associated yard equipment in operation in the Port. There is a phased replacement plan

for the three Post Panamax Cranes acquired in 1998 and the two Post Panamax Cranes acquired in 2007, depending on traffic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Acting Director General of the Mauritius Ports Authority that with the present set-up, no delays have been encountered at Port Louis Harbour in the berthing and unberthing of vessels except for one vessel which could not be berthed in September 2020 due to its defective bow thruster representing a risk for its safe berthing. Two vessels were berthed but could not be operated, and had to leave the Port owing to the presence of maggots onboard.

I am further informed that from 01 January to 15 March 2020, prior to the confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an average of nine container ships which were calling at Port Louis per week with an average of some 9,400 container moves. During the lockdown period, the average number of vessel calls went down to seven container ships with an average of 6,400 container moves weekly.

After the lockdown period, there has been a progressive increase in the volume of containers handled per week, moving from 6,400 to 11,000 container moves in September 2020 with an average of 10 ships calling weekly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past decades, ships have grown in size and a variety of ships have now emerged, which are now calling at Port Louis Harbour. These ships fall under categories such as general cargo, containerized cargo ships, dry bulk carriers, liquid bulk tankers, cruise vessels and gas carriers. There is, therefore, a constant need to improve our Port infrastructure and upgrade our Port equipment to cater for the needs of these ships so as to remain competitive with the Ports in our region.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. In his original reply, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned that one vessel could not be berthed in September 2020. My information is two vessels could not be berthed in September 2020.

My question starts: can I ask the hon. Prime Minister which vessel was he referring to? Was it MSC Livorno that has skipped Port Louis on 10 September 2020 and the container was transhipped to Colombo and the container finally reached Mauritius with a delay on another vessel, which is the MSC Vanessa, or was the Prime Minister referring to vessel Maersk Stralsund that had to skip Port Louis on 14 September 2020 and finally called to Mauritius on 02 October 2020, thereby incurring delays and possibly cost to people who have imported things on these two vessels? Which vessel was he referring to?

The Prime Minister: I am trying to find out from my notes; if you can bear with me. Yes, here it is. The MSC Livorno could not berth at Port Louis given that the ship's bow thruster was defective and I am informed that there were 250 import containers on that ship that were transported by MSC Vanessa which arrived in Port Louis on 27 September 2020. This is the information that I have.

Mr Osman Mahomed: True enough. This is the information that I have as well. But can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Vessel Maersk Stralsund that was expected on 14 September 2020 has had to skip Port Louis and then returned back on 02 October 2020, with a huge delay? Is that a fact, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have this information in my notes. I have not been provided with this information, and I do not even see the name. If the hon. Member can repeat the name of that ship.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Maersk Stralsund.

The Prime Minister: I have now been provided with the information. Maersk Stralsund skipped Port Louis as decided by the shipping line. It was the shipping line which decided to skip Mauritius and not to come to Mauritius.

Mr Osman Mahomed: This is a subject I would like to discuss about, but it is outside the purview of the question. But it is going to be the next question because a lot of shipping lines are skipping Mauritius these days. So, next week, I am coming with this question.

In his original reply, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned about repairs to tugs and all other equipment. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether storage of cargo, which was in his original reply, is a source of problem as well at Port Louis Port at the moment?

The Prime Minister: Storage of cargo?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. There is not enough storage space. That is why a lot of shipping companies are now skipping Port Louis as a Port and going to other destinations like Colombo, for example.

The Prime Minister: I have not been informed about this situation. Maybe if I can be provided with the information. But there is no problem about storage of cargo.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to the vessel that could not berth, will the hon. Prime Minister state if the consignees had to pay any additional sum of money for the delay in the delivery of the containers?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the 250 import containers had, in fact, arrived on another ship called the MSC Vanessa. So, of course, there was a delay, but I am informed that there was no financial implication for the consignees except for the 20 days' delays that were sustained.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that due to the recurrent problems and disruption in the Port due to shortage of tugs, broken cranes, poor maintenance of equipment and shortage of workforces, all raised in a meeting held on 09 October - I am tabling Notes of Meeting - the MSC, Mediterranean Shipping Company, shipping line, is considering using the Colombo Port as hub because according to an extract of the meeting, which I will table, where MSC Mauritius Limited will be using Colombo Port as hub again, and then Mr Sunta asked the MSC to convince the Head Office ...

Mr Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Juman: Yes. ... convince the Head Office to reconsider using Port Louis as a hub. And then Captain Samson - I will come with my question -

Mr Speaker: Your supplementary question...

Mr Juman: ... said that their Head Office has lost confidence in Port Louis Port as they have been promised better services since three years now. I am tabling a copy. Now, I will ask the hon. Prime Minister what he intends to do to bring confidence to our clients and to our Port.

The Prime Minister: First of all, I need to take note of this document that is being tabled and I need to check whether there was, in fact, a meeting and what was said at that meeting and, if ever those were the words that were said, why they were said, and for what reason. I am informed that the MSC has, in fact, decided to tranship to Colombo instead of Reunion because of problems at the Port of Reunion. So, of course, I shall find out, and in the light of the quite lengthy information that has been provided, I shall enquire about the situation.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/685 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. PQs B/674, B/675, B/677, B/678, B/679, B/680, B/681, B/682, B/683, B/684, B/686 have been withdrawn.

Next question, hon. Lobine!

ADSU – POLICE OFFICERS – ARREST

(No. B/669) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the police officers posted at the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, since 2018 to date, who have been arrested and provisionally charged with –

- (a) offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and
- (b) other criminal offences, indicating in each case the number thereof interdicted and/or suspended.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) is responsible for the prevention and detection of all offences connected with dangerous drugs.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 2018 to date, three Police Officers posted at the ADSU have been arrested and provisionally charged under the Prevention of Corruption Act and thereafter interdicted from duty.

Regarding part (b) of the question, since 2018 to date, no Police Officer posted to the ADSU has been arrested or provisionally charged for other criminal offences which, of course, exclude contraventions.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the Prime Minister aware that there is an ongoing inquiry by ICAC against ADSU with regard to the handling of reward money and secret receipts given to informers, and there is a Judge's Order to that effect? Is the Prime Minister aware of this inquiry?

The Prime Minister: This, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not related to the Question. The Question is about the number of Officers who have been provisionally charged since 2018. I know that the hon. Member is a lawyer and he knows the difference between provisionally

charged and an ongoing inquiry. I am not aware about ongoing inquiry. If you had asked me about ongoing inquiry, I would, of course, have tried to find out the relevant information. Just to finish, the Question is again in regard to those who have been provisionally charged and I have given the answer.

Mr Lobine: Is the Prime Minister aware that with regard to the two persons who are provisionally charged, there is also an ongoing inquiry with regard to handling of reward money and ICAC had to go to the Judge in Chambers to get a Judge's Order to pursue further inquiry? Is the Prime Minister aware of this?

The Prime Minister: I would not be aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I think that the hon. Member was here when the PNQ was put, and I replied. With regard to ICAC, I am provided with whatever information they will provide me with. So, I cannot say anything about the ongoing investigation even though there have been provisional cases where people have been provisionally charged. So, I cannot say anything more than that, and you will understand that we cannot give any information that will prejudice either the inquiry or the case.

Mr Lobine: Can the Prime Minister inform this House, with regard to the functioning of ADSU, whether he will come forward with the major recommendations in the report on drug trafficking in 2018, asking for the disbandment of ADSU and replacing same by the National Drugs Investigation Commission? Is the Prime Minister coming ahead with this major setting up of this Commission?

The Prime Minister: If I can recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a question to that effect before and I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I must have given.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/681 and B/688 have been withdrawn. Next question!

MESNIL & ST PAUL – DOGS & CATS – DEATH

(No. B/670) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the recent incidents whereby several dogs and cats were found dead in the region of Mesnil and St. Paul, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry is being carried out thereinto, and, if so, indicate –

- (a) where matters stand, and
- (b) the measures being envisaged to avoid the recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 17 October 2020, Police attended to a reported case of alleged animal poisoning at Parisot Lane, Mesnil, where the carcass of a bitch with foam and bloodish liquid on its mouth, was found lying in a bushy land.

The carcass was secured and sent to the Livestock and Veterinary Division, Agricultural Services of Réduit for autopsy, which was carried out on 19 October 2020. The autopsy revealed a suspected case of animal poisoning. Samples were secured and sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for toxicological examination.

Moreover, on Sunday 18 October 2020, a member of the Second Chance Animal Rescue, residing at CTR Lane, Mesnil, produced a plastic bag to the Police containing chicken skins, which he suspected to be poisoned, for enquiry. The exhibits were sent to the FSL for examination. The Central Division CID has initiated an enquiry into the matter and during the course of the investigation, four suspects were interviewed and their dwellings were searched. However, no incriminating article was found. They were allowed to go after enquiry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during further investigation, the Police were informed that four additional dogs were killed and have been disposed of by their respective owners. No cat was found dead. The enquiry is ongoing.

As regards part (b) of the question, the following measures have been taken to avoid such recurrence –

- (i) Police have increased vigilance in the region by deploying more Police Officers on foot and mobile patrols. The local Police are working jointly with the Divisional Supporting Unit, Emergency Response Services and Divisional CID to gather intelligence on the potential suspects pending report from the FSL;
- (ii) the Crime Prevention Unit and Neighbourhood Officers are carrying out sensitisation campaigns in the region with a view to raising awareness among the inhabitants and counselling them on measures for preventing cruelty to animals;

- (iii) the Police are working in close collaboration with Non-Governmental Organisations and the Mauritius Society of Animal Welfare (MSAW) for protecting animals at risk and helping pet owners to ensure the welfare of their pets, and
- (iv) the Police are using the Safe City Cameras in the area to keep surveillance over suspicious vehicles and persons moving in and out the locality.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare has been made aware of these specific cases?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, I gathered information from my colleague Minister who is responsible for this portfolio and the Animal Welfare Unit is also involved, and it will probably submit a report to the concerned authority in due course.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PRIME MINISTER'S RELIEF FUND – LIST OF PROJECTS – CRITERIA

(No. B/671) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, he will –

- (a) table a list of projects financed over the past two financial years, indicating the criteria laid down, and
- (b) state the actual balance thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Prime Minister's Relief Fund has provided an amount of Rs552 m. to the National Environment Fund to finance wholly or partly projects to be implemented by public entities.

In fact, the Prime Minister's Relief Fund started financing projects as from May 2019 and as at date, 392 projects have been funded for the rehabilitation and re-profiling of beaches, cleaning, desilting, rehabilitation and upgrading of drains, bridges and rivers,

cleaning and embellishment of public sites, construction and upgrading of drains, construction, resurfacing and upgrading of roads. I am tabling a list of the 392 projects.

The guiding principle for funding of the projects is that they would have to be in line with the objective of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to support activities for a good cause in the public interest.

The funds transferred to the National Environment Fund by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund have been allocated to the following public entities, excluding contingencies –

- (i) Rs435 m. to the National Development Unit for the Implementation and Upgrading of Drainage Infrastructure throughout the Island;
- (ii) Rs42 m. to the 12 Local Authorities for Cleaning, Desilting, Rehabilitation and Upgrading of Drains, Bridges and Rivers;
- (iii) Rs13.1 m. to the 12 Local Authorities for Embellishment Works, Mega Cleaning Activities and Bulky Waste Collection;
- (iv) Rs38.1 m. to the Living Environment Unit of the Ministry of Environment for Cleaning and Embellishment of Public Sites;
- (v) Rs17.5 m. to the Living Environment Unit of the Ministry of Environment for the Rehabilitation of Public Beaches, and
- (vi) Rs4.4 m. to the Integrated Coastal Zone Management of the Ministry of Environment for the Re-profiling of Public Beaches.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Treasury that the balance of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund as at 29 October 2020 stood at Rs184,437,579.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that following the grounding of MV Wakashio, a Special Bank Account was opened under the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, the purpose of which was to ensure proper recording and tracking of expenditure by Ministries/Departments and to assist in building up claims for insurance purposes.

In this connection, a sum of Rs100 m. has been provided under the Fund, and as at date, a sum of Rs95 m. has already been paid and Rs5 m. committed.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the mode of approval before any disbursement is made? Is there any committee which approves the disbursement?

The Prime Minister: Yes, there is a Board which is comprised of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and other members. All the requests go to this Board, which will then decide how to allocate funds for the different projects.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can the hon. Prime Minister table the composition of the Board and also who chairs the Board?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Mr Ballah, who is the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, is the Chairperson. Mr Neerunjun, the Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office. Mr Samlall, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training. Mr Hoolass, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. Mrs Auladin, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development. Dr. Ramasawmy, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health and Wellness, and Mr Ramdeen, Accountant General.

Mr Speaker: No further supplementary? Honourable Members, I suspend the sitting for one and a half hour.

At 1.09 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.44 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/672 and B/673 have been withdrawn.

Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! The Table has been advised that PQs B/700 and B/710 will be replied by the hon. Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

PQ B/733 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.

PQs B/703, B/712, B/718, B/719, B/724, B/725, B/726, B/727, B/728, B/729, B/737, B/741, B/743, B/744, B/746, B/747, B/748, B/752, B/755, B/756, B/757 and B/758 have been withdrawn.

Hon.Osman Mahomed!

**IMMIGRATION SQUARE URBAN TERMINAL PROJECT -
CONSULTANCY SERVICES - CONTRACT**

(No. B/689) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Immigration Square Urban Terminal Project, he will state whether the contract for the consultancy services for the clearances pertaining to the Heritage Impact Assessment and Visual Impact Assessment have already been awarded by his Ministry and if so, indicate the name of the successful bidder.

Mr Teeluck: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Immigration Square Urban Terminal project is located in the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. As such, as per the guidelines of the UNESCO, prior to undertaking construction works, the promoter of the project will have to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the project and submit same to the World Heritage Centre for technical review and approval.

However, before undertaking this exercise, UNESCO and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites – the advisory body to UNESCO) had in an advisory mission report in May 2018, recommended the following –

- (i) The development of an Action Area Plan (AAP) integrating all large scale development projects in the area adjacent to and around the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property;
- (ii) The submission of the Action Area Plan to UNESCO for technical review and approval;
- (iii) Once the Action Area Plan is approved, an overarching HIA/VIA for all projects in the AAP to be prepared for submission to UNESCO for approval;
- (iv) The conduct of individual HIAs/VIAs for the projects after approval of the overarching HIA/VIA by UNESCO, and lastly
- (v) The submission of the individual HIAs/VIAs to UNESCO for approval.

Accordingly, an AAP integrating eight large scale projects proposed for development in this area has been prepared by the then Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning in collaboration with my Ministry.

This AAP has been technically reviewed and approved by ICOMOS in June 2019 and was subsequently gazetted on 26 December 2019.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with the recommendations of UNESCO, my Ministry has, on 03 July 2020, launched an invitation for proposal through open advertised bidding for the enlistment of consultancy services for the conduct of an overarching HIA/VIA report for projects within the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property.

The evaluation exercise has been completed and a letter of intent has been issued to the selected bidder on the 12 of October 2020.

And as per the provisions of the bidding document, negotiations are ongoing between my Ministry and the selected bidder. Once all the issues have been clarified, the letter of award will be issued.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. In reply to PQ B/55 of 2020, the hon. Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, hon. Ganoo, did mention that the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage is working on the timeline of February-March 2021 as regards clearances from the World Heritage Centre. I understand that letter of award has not been fully issued. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this timeline still hold or not?

Mr Teeluck: Mr Speaker, Sir, it has to be highlighted that the first tender exercise was launched on 09 January 2020, then only was that timeline set but that exercise was non-responsive and we had to launch a second tender exercise which I mentioned was launched on 03 July. So, there will be a new timeline according to this new exercise.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can we have the new timeline?

Mr Teeluck: Well, we have issued a letter of intent, so now, as I mentioned, we are discussing with the selected bidder. Once the letter of award is issued, then only we will be able to have a set timeline of when the report will be approved by the UNESCO and then get it finalised.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Minister the name of the selected firm?

Mr Teeluck: Well, as I said, the letter of intent has been issued; the letter of award has not yet. So, I think we will only be able to reveal the name of the selected bidder once the letter of award is issued.

Mr Osman Mahomed: One question more, Mr Speaker, Sir. For a consultant to ascertain clearances pertaining to Heritage Impact Assessment and Visual Impact Assessment, the consultant will have to be in the presence of an architectural plan, at least, a concept plan for us, for him or her to know the impact that this will have on the World Heritage Site. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry or any pertinent Ministry is in the presence of the architectural plan from the promoter whom I understand is High Limited?

Mr Teeluck: Well, my Ministry is working on the overarching aspect of the buffer zone. When it comes to specific projects within that buffer zone, it will relate to the different Ministries so I will not be able to answer the hon. Member on this.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PUBLIC HOSPITALS - FOREIGN SPOUSES OF MAURITIAN NATIONALS - TREATMENT FEES

(No. B/690) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the payment of treatment fees for foreign spouses of Mauritian nationals in public hospitals, he will state where matters stand as to the new policy being worked out for the exemption thereof, giving details thereof.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the current policy of my Ministry regarding payment of treatment fees for foreign patients at Regional Hospitals and any Health Centres is that -

“All foreign patients are exempted from payment for any emergency treatment at the Accident and Emergency Department as outpatients. This includes tests performed, examination and treatment. However, any foreigner, other than a foreign worker holding a work permit and any Comorian patient referred by the Comorian Authorities, admitted in our hospitals should pay relevant fees.”

For foreign workers holding a work permit, Government agreed to exempt payment of treatment fees in our hospitals since 2001. For Comorian patients, there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries.

Based on the existing policy, foreign spouses of Mauritian nationals are subject to payment of applicable fees at hospital as inpatient pending the obtention of citizenship as a Mauritian.

The fees applicable are based on the National Health Account that is used to calculate the rate. Foreign spouses attending Accident and Emergency Department are not charged any fees and are being taken care of by the relevant departments of our public hospitals.

In view of the increasing number of requests for exemption from payment of treatment fees in respect of foreigners married to a Mauritian National, a new policy is being finalised at the level of my Ministry, in consultation with the authorities concerned.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Well, I am very pleased to hear about this, hon. Minister because we receive many, many people at our doorsteps encountering this problem. The Minister is aware, I have discussed with him so many times on this.

Can we please have a timeline when this policy will be in place because sometimes it is too much to handle?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is seeking the advice of the State Law Office in regard to the implication of having two categories for granting exemptions. One would be the foreign spouses of Mauritian Nationals and the other for foreigners detaining resident permit. So, once we have the State Law advice, from then on, we will be in a better position to see if we can implement this decision.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Minister whether consideration would be given to advising any spouses that are admitted in hospital the estimated amount that they will have to pay at the time of admission because, according to my information, this is not being done and a lot of patients are leaving the hospital with a big massive bill?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. There are clear guidelines about the payment to be incurred by any spouse of foreign nationals, whenever they are admitted in the hospital. In the guidelines, the casualty fees, the doctors' fees, the treatment fees are clearly mentioned. I believe, this is done at the level of hospitals and I think here that that information can be given once the patient is admitted.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House with which Authorities consultations are being undertaken and which category of requests of treatment fees have been received from foreigners married to Mauritians, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. The Authorities are the Ministry of Finance, the Home Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office and the State Law Office. Now, since the last few years, the complaints and the requests for refund, specially of treatment fees have been received from foreigners who are married to Mauritians and they follow antenatal treatment in our hospital for which they are required to pay fees for antenatal care and delivery also. So, those representations have been received especially from the Mauritian spouses so that we can consider exemption.

Mr Speaker: Hon. X. L. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister given that these foreign workers pay income tax, pay VAT and all the other taxes, would not it be discriminatory to exclude them and their families from full treatment under our public health system?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is at the same time trying to compile information from other countries where foreign spouses of their respective nationals are being exempted from payment. So, let us have the information and see what is the legal framework and then we can go ahead.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: The hon. Minister has just mentioned that the authorities working on this dossier is the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister's Office. Well, I have dug into the file for additional questions and I know at the moment the stumbling block is between the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Health, each passing the ball to each other and the Ministry of Finance is now requesting at public hospitals how much is the amount that Government will need to forego in approving this issue. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not find it an aberration, let us put it this way, that for a few hundred thousand rupees as compared to the Rs13 billion that the budget of his Ministry, that we should wipe the slate clean and come with a new policy once and for all rather than asking questions here and there?

Dr. Jagutpal: I think, hon. Member, I have already mentioned that we are still waiting for the State Law Office advice. It is decided to exempt at the same time, exempting foreign spouses of Mauritian Nationals and not exempt foreigners detaining resident permit, we have to ascertain that we do not create two different categories of payment. Let us have the advice of the State Law Office and then we are going to assessfA.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

**RENGANADEN SEENEEVASSEN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL - PEST
CONTROL EXERCISE**

(No. B/691) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the recent health problems encountered by the students and staff members of the Renganaden Seeneevassen State Secondary School following the pest control exercise carried out thereat in October last thereat, she will state if an inquiry has been initiated thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the recent health problems, namely itching and burning sensations encountered at Renganaden Seeneevassen State Secondary School, an enquiry has been initiated by the Health and Wellness Directorate of my Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness regarding the pest control exercises. The enquiry has revealed the following: Following reporting of bed bugs at the school, the Vector Biology and Control Division of the Ministry of Health and Wellness carried out a survey and advised to spray insecticides. The first spraying of external walls of three blocks, B, C, D and laboratories of the school was carried out after school hours on Friday, 11 September 2020. A second exercise was conducted in 15 infected classrooms on Friday, 18 September 2020. On Sunday, 20 September, the classrooms were washed and cleaned for the resumption of school on Monday, 21 September.

However, in spite of these spraying exercises, the presence of bed bugs was still being reported. The Vector Biology and Control Division advised a general school spraying and same was scheduled for Tuesday, 20 October 2020 during the one-week midterm break. This disinfection of the entire school was carried out by Port Louis Health Office and the Communicable Disease Control Unit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as advised by the Sanitary Officers, the classrooms of the schools were kept closed for two days during the midterm break, then subsequently opened for cleaning so as to be ready for school resumption.

On Monday, 26 October, when the school resumed, it was reported that 40 students were having burning and itching sensations. The matter was immediately reported to the Ministry of Health and Wellness. A Community Physician attended the school as support,

and arrangements were also made to fast track the referral of students to Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital.

On Tuesday, 27 October, a Community Physician and a Senior Public Health Inspector attended the school and recommended that the classrooms at Renganaden Seeneevassen SSS be thoroughly washed and properly ventilated. However, in spite of that, students continued to report about itching and burning sensations and were referred to hospital for necessary treatment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that as at 29 October 2020, classrooms in all blocks were cleaned a second time. Instructions have been issued to the school to arrange for thorough cleaning and ventilation of classrooms as well as ensuring close monitoring of the situation. I am informed that as at today, this morning, no cases of itching and burning sensations have been reported.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Several students, I am not too sure about staff, but several students have had to go in and out of hospital because of the problem the Minister herself has just mentioned. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the inquiry that has been initiated has come out with conclusion about which type of chemicals were used and the more so which contractor did the dispensing of that chemical so that this problem does not happen to other students across the island?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, as mentioned in my answer, the spraying was carried out by the Port Louis Health Office and the CDCU.

Mr Osman Mahomed: And the chemicals used?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: And the chemicals used, I have the names, they are the usual ones that are normally used. I will just give you the names of the chemicals used.

Mr Speaker: So, you can transmit the reply or whatever information you want to transmit.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Chemicals to be used include pyrethroid, bethroid, to be applied on all surfaces, desks and chairs in the classrooms and fendona. These are the substances used.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister who certifies that the classrooms are safe after the spraying of chemicals? Is there anyone from her Ministry or

from the Ministry of Health or from the Mauritius Standards Bureau who can certify that it is safe for children to go back to the school?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the Ministry of Health gave all the instructions and it was meant for the Rector and the school to decide whether the classes were cleaned properly or not. The cleaning was done but seemingly it appears that, it was not properly done because students kept on mentioning that they had the burning and itching sensations. However, during the past weekend, thorough cleaning has been carried out and thankfully this morning, there were no reports of any student complaining.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: A similar situation occurred at the Queen Elizabeth College in September 2018, '*Présence de puces au QEC, pas d'école ce lundi*', this is the title of *l'Express* I have looked at before I came. Can I ask the hon. Minister, being given that many students have had to go to hospital, maybe absent, have had to miss school because of the problem, and those who would be sitting for the SC and HSC examination next time, whether the absenteeism occurring because of this problem will be taken into consideration in granting the grant for SC and HSC fees because if the student is absent a number of times, he or she will, she, in that case, will not benefit from the grant?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the policy for eligibility for the grant is quite clear, that if ever the absence is supported by evidence and if the Rector finds that it is a proper, valid case, normally, the student is allowed to get the grant. But, I must say that this is the normal situation. It's not triggered by this particular event. Normally, if the absence can be justified, the student is given the chance to get the grant.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, before asking my question, I would like to declare my interest as my daughters are admitted to the school. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the protocol for the school when they bring the students to the hospital? Why I am asking this question, because when I went to the hospital to pick up my daughter, there were more than a dozen students who were accompanied by only one staff member of the school, and clearly she couldn't deal with the situation. So, I would ask the hon. Minister if she could review this protocol.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, depending on the urgency of the situation, depending on the gravity of the situation, I believe that the Rector can send more teachers to accompany students, if it is required. But since it was a case of burning sensation,

I have been told that a teacher was accompanying the students. So, in case there is a need for more, obviously, the Rector will do the needful.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD - LOANS - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/692) **Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of loan applications received as at to date, indicating

—

- (a) the names of the applicants therefor;
- (b) if same have been approved and disbursed, indicating in each case the amount thereof.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, avec votre permission, je répondrai conjointement aux questions B/692 et B/715 qui se rapportent au même sujet.

La Mauritius Investment Corporation est une société privée à responsabilité limitée, entièrement détenue par la Banque de Maurice.

A ce titre, il ne serait pas approprié que je commente les opérations de la *MIC*.

Mr X. L. Duval: May I refer the hon. Minister to a statement made by the Governor of the bank in May, a public statement, where he said —

“As regards the *MIC*, *la transparence sera le maître-mot.* »

So, why is now the Minister reversing this attitude and refusing to answer to elected Members of the House regarding Rs80 billion of taxpayers' money?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, la Banque de Maurice est une institution indépendante. Le gouverneur a fait un entretien où il a dit qu'il allait donner toutes les informations, donc, ça va être la Banque de Maurice qui va donner les informations concernant la *MIC* et je pense que ce sera fait très bientôt.

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask...

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mr X. L. Duval: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have to ask him, Mr Speaker, Sir, because a few months ago...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member...

Mr X.L. Duval: May I explain myself?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, may I explain myself?

Mr X.L. Duval: Yes. Explain yourself.

Mr Speaker: I am the Chair, may I explain myself? The Minister does not want to answer this question. I cannot force him and you cannot force him....

Mr X.L. Duval: I can ask him to...

Mr Speaker: ...and there is no supplementary question when an answer is refused.

Mr X.L. Duval: May I explain myself?

Mr Speaker: Proceed with your next question!

Mr X.L. Duval: Can I explain myself now? A few months ago, in June, Question B/90, on the Bank of Mauritius, relating to Rs18 billion of taxpayers' money, the Minister gave all the information regarding the Bank of Mauritius, who is saying now it's independent. He gave all the information, even what he is proposing to do with the rest of the funds. So, I am entitled to ask why, now, are we trying to hide? Why? What is fishy, what is wrong, what is to be hidden from the public regarding even bigger sums of money than the Rs18 billion which he has replied to in this House?

Mr Speaker: Thank you. You have explained yourself. Move on to the next question now!

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Speaker: Let me give my ruling. You put a question to the hon. Minister, the Minister does not want to answer, I cannot force him and you cannot force him. Therefore, there is no right for any supplementary question. Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr X.L. Duval: During...

Mr Speaker: Please! One Chair! Many seats!

(Interruptions)

And therefore, you are losing the time. Hon. Member, you are losing the time, precious time! You have another Question, B/694!

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I am totally shocked at this attitude by the Government through the Minister of Finance, and the public will make their own conclusions about what is happening, and I will have a Press conference to tell them what is happening.

Mr Speaker, Sir, B/693!

BANK OF MAURITIUS – FUNDS INVESTED

(No. B/693) Mr X.L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to funds invested into the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., by the Bank of Mauritius, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the amount thereof, indicating if same was raised from the sale of foreign reserves, loans from the market or from other sources.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, avec votre permission, je répondrai conjointement aux questions B/693 et B/695 qui portent sur le même sujet.

La Banque de Maurice est tenue, en vertu de l'article 26 de la *Bank of Mauritius Act*, de préserver la confidentialité des informations relatives aux affaires de la Banque.

Il est donc interdit à la Banque de divulguer toute information se rapportant à la conduite de ses opérations.

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the Bank of Mauritius publishes in detail all the information...

Mr Speaker: So, hon. Member...

Mr X.L. Duval: ...but is not yet published because it is always...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If the Bank of Mauritius publishes, so you can have consultation to get official documents.

(Interruptions)

This is not a Parliamentary Question. This is a Standing Order by the way!

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, you are supposed to defend transparency. You are supposed to defend the rights of Members. I am asking questions relating to Rs80 billion.

Mr Speaker: But you should ask the right questions.

Mr X.L. Duval: I am asking the questions that have been replied to in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, nothing new in what I am asking. Shall I refer you, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the various PQs which have been replied to in this House? May I give you the PQs relating to the Bank of Mauritius...

Mr Speaker: I am not bound by what you are stating or explaining. I have given my ruling and you are bound by my ruling.

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I even asked a PNQ to the then Minister of Finance last year and he replied on the Bank of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker: You explained yourself. Now move on to your next question!

(Interruptions)

Mr X.L. Duval: Under protest, Mr Speaker, B/694!

**MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD - BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
INVESTMENT COMMITTEE, LEGAL & OTHER FINANCIAL ADVISERS**

(No. B/694) Mr X.L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the composition of the members of the –

- (a) Board of Directors thereof;
- (b) Investment Committee thereof, and
- (c) Legal and other financial advisers thereof, indicating in each case the fees paid/or payable thereto.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, avec votre permission, je répondrai...

(Interruptions)

Mr X.L. Duval: *Même zafer! Même zafer!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You don't have the floor!

Mr X.L. Duval: But I...

Mr Speaker: You don't have the floor! You don't have the floor! And let the Minister give the reply.

Mr X.L. Duval: He has replied!

Dr. Padayachy: I am replying. *M. le président, comme indiqué précédemment ...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You don't have the floor.

Dr. Padayachy: He is not replying.

Mr Speaker: He is replying!

Dr. Padayachy: Comme indiqué précédemment dans ma réponse à la question B/130, le nom des membres du Conseil d'administration de la *Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd* est –

1. Lord Meghnad Jagdishchandra Desai
Parlementaire, Royaume-Uni, en tant que Président
2. M. Mardayah Kona Yerukunodu
Premier Vice-Gouverneur, Banque de Maurice, en tant que membre
3. Mme Hemlata Sadhna Sewraj-Gopal
Second Sous-Gouverneur, Banque de Maurice, en tant que membre
4. Dr. Yousouf Ismael
Secrétaire Général, *The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry*, en tant que membre
5. M. Jean Michel Louis Rivalland
Directeur Général du Groupe *Swan Life Ltd*, en tant que membre.

M. le président, la *Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd* étant une société privée à responsabilité limitée, il ne serait pas approprié de divulguer les noms des membres de son Comité d'investissement...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Padayachy:...et de ses conseillers légaux.

(Interruptions)

Mr X.L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a supplementary question. Even as he has replied a little bit to the question, because I asked not only the names, but how much were paid. This is the first time in Mauritius, I think, that he will refuse to tell us how much a Board of Directors being paid by public funds, how much the members are earning.

Dr. Padayachy: Je n'ai pas l'information concernant le paiement. Je reviendrai...

(Interruptions)

Je peux parler? Je vais...

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Padayachy: Je vais revenir avec les informations sur le paiement.

Mr X.L. Duval: It was a formal question.

Dr. Padayachy: Je n'avais pas encore reçu...

Mr X.L. Duval: How can you not have the information?

Dr. Padayachy: Je n'avais pas encore reçu les informations dessus. Je vais revenir là-dessus.

Mr X.L. Duval : Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that Lord Desai, who has a glorious past is now 80 years old? He is partially deaf, has no knowledge of local, political connections and intricacies, and he is only intervening by video conference? Is he telling us, now, that this is the person whom we should have blind confidence in?

(Interruptions)

Milliards! Is that also a secret? No?

Dr. Padayachy: Je vais répondre très simplement. Je pense que l'ancien *Deputy Prime Minister* et ancien Leader de l'Opposition ne sait pas qu'on est toujours sous COVID à travers le monde et qu'il y a qu'à Maurice qu'on arrive à circuler librement. C'est pour cela, comme à travers le monde, on est en train d'utiliser toute la technologie pour avoir ce genre

de réunion. Donc, c'est un peu commun et connu. Donc il n'y a pas de problème. C'est la personne qui compte.

Mr X. L. Duval: The person - exactly I am saying the person, is very old. Can we have the microphone, please? Is there a problem with my microphone now? Mr Speaker, Sir, the question was not just on whether he is intervening on video conference but his age. I would also like to ask and the fact is that he is partially deaf.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can tell us this Mr Yousouf Ismaël, is he the same person that was recently interviewed under warning by ICAC? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this person also we are not allowed to know what he is doing there and what he is approving, and the fees that he is earning?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je ne suis pas au courant que le Secrétaire Général de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Maurice a été *under warning* à l'ICAC. Il ne faut pas simplement lire ce qu'il y a dans la presse. Il faut regarder si c'est un fait réel.

Mr X. L. Duval: If you want to answer the question, I have got no way of telling whatever I read in the Press is true or not, but I believe it is true. (*Expunged following the Announcement of Mr Speaker at the Sitting of Tuesday 10.11.20*)

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Quiet!

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président comme j'ai répondu dans la question, c'est une société privée et il n'est pas approprié de répondre à cette question comme toutes les sociétés privées.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr X. L. Duval: Can I ask the hon. Minister because he...

Mr Speaker: That is the last supplementary question.

Mr X. L. Duval: Last one, Mr Speaker with your kind permission because this is Rs80 billion and this is the only question he is replying. He has not replied to any others.

Mr Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister because he has taken Rs80 billion of our money and given it to MIC via the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius because he has changed the law and this is why he should answer here. Now...

Mr Speaker: Your question!

Mr X. L. Duval: Now, these Rs80 billion, is it any of it - can I have a straight answer from him - how much of it is going to go to property developers close to the Government? How much of it is going to go to lame ducks close to Government and to him? How much of it is going to go to speculative ventures because people are close of family members to Government Ministers, Mr Speaker. This we have a right to know.

Mr Speaker: No speech!

Mr X. L. Duval: It is a question.

Mr Speaker: It is a lengthy question, it is too long.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, monsieur Duval est un ancien ministre des Finances. Il devrait savoir qu'il y a une ligne entre la banque centrale d'un pays et le ministère des Finances et que cette ligne, on ne doit pas la franchir. Dans le passé, c'est vrai que c'était une pratique courante de crier dans la presse qu'il y avait des bagarres entre le ministre des Finances...

(Interruptions)

J'ai le droit de répondre? C'était une pratique courante de critiquer les gouverneurs et le gouverneur de...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You do not have the floor, hon. Duval!

Dr. Padayachy: et le gouverneur de critiquer le ministre des Finances. Ce n'est plus la pratique.

(Interruptions)

Parce que la pratique veut qu'il y ait des réunions...

Mr Speaker: Next question! They do not want to listen.

BANK OF MAURITIUS - FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

(No. B/695) Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to

foreign exchange reserves, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to -

- (a) the total amount;
 - (i) invested in the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd.;
 - (ii) released on the foreign exchange markets to stabilise the Rupee, and
 - (iii) received by way of loans from overseas lenders, giving a breakdown thereof, and
- (b) any other transfers made to Government or parastatal bodies, indicating the amount thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/693)

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: B/696, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: *La honte!*

(Interruptions)

La honte !

CENTRAL WATER AUTHORITY - WATER SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS

(No. B/696) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Constituency No. 15, La Caverne and Phoenix, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons for the frequent drastic water cuts and to the recent water supply problems encountered in certain regions thereof, indicating the measures being taken to provide an adequate supply of water thereto.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/696, B/701, B/706 and B/717 together as they generally relate to the same subject matter regarding the water situation, water supply disruptions and remedial measures being taken to address same. I will also provide specific information requested for the individual PQs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Mauritius Meteorological Services, there has been a deficiency in rainfall over the island for the period January to October 2020. Except for the

months of January, March and June 2020, rainfall has been below normal. As per the Met Services, it is expected that rainfall will be below normal for the months of November and December 2020, with the onset of summer rainfall anticipated at the end of December 2020.

This situation has consequently affected our ground and surface water levels. As at 31 October 2020, the total storage in our main reservoirs amounted to 53.82 Million metre cube (Mm³) compared to 92.20 Million metre cube (Mm³) in 2019. Therefore, the total storage is 30% lower than the same period last year. For instance, Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir is at 71.2% of its capacity, Bagatelle at 49.4% of its capacity, La Nicolière at 56.5% of its capacity and Midlands is at 57.0% of its capacity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a copy of the water levels in our reservoirs as at 31 October 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since August 2020, a Water Resources Monitoring Committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry and has been meeting on a weekly basis with representatives of the Met Services, Water Resources Unit, the Central Water Authority and the Irrigation Authority to monitor the surface and groundwater levels across the island, and make projections for reservoir storage based on inflow and outflow scenarios, and evolve a coordinated approach regarding supply and distribution of water for domestic, irrigation and other purposes.

In view of persisting dry conditions, a Contingency Plan for the Dry Season has been elaborated such that immediate and short-term measures to alleviate the situation in the water stressed regions, be identified and put in place. I personally, Mr Speaker, Sir, hold weekly meetings on the Contingency Plan to oversee effective implementation of these measures.

At the level of the CWA, a Water Crisis Committee has been established to monitor the situation on a daily basis and take actions as appropriate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been observed that a few regions have been more severely affected by the deficient rainfall, particularly due to the drying up of the borehole which normally caters for water production in such regions. The most affected regions are mainly located in the southwestern and western coast. As such, the focus of the Contingency Plan has been on those black spots.

As immediate measures to mitigate the effect of declining water levels, the Water Resources Unit of my Ministry and the Central Water Authority have taken a number of initiatives to supplement the existing ground and surface water resources -

- (a) Tapping of 2,000 m³ of water from a pipeline at Magenta to inject in Bois Puant Reservoir to increase distribution in the regions of Rivière Noire, part of Tamarin, La Gaulette, Case Noyale, Cotteau Raffin from 5 hours to 10 hours daily;
- (b) tapping of 2,000 m³ of water at Bois Noir River to supplement distribution at Le Morne and Case Noyale which is expected to improve from 5 to 10 hours daily. This project is being done in collaboration with HSBC and Lions Club.
- (c) tapping of some 2,000-2,500 m³ of water from other rivers by the CWA at 10 sites together with the construction of river intake structures for installation of pressure filtration plants. Works have been completed at Mon Loisir Rouillard, Plaine des Papayes, L'Unité and La Marie. Works are expected to be completed by mid-November at New Goodlands, Rivière du Poste, Bois Chéri, Chazal, Beau Champ and Ripailles Rivulet. These projects are expected to increase water supply in the regions of Goodlands, Grand Gaube, Sottise, Grand Bay, Cap Malheureux, Mont Choisy, Triolet, Pointe aux Piments, Lallmatie, Brisée Verdière, Bon Accueil, Rivière du Poste, Rose Belle, Camp Diable, Rivière des Anguilles, Bois Chéri, La Flora, Surinam, Chemin Grenier, Bel Ombre, Baie du Cap, Grand Sable, Petit Sable, Quatre Soeurs, Vallée des Prêtres and Crève Coeur among others;
- (d) installation of one containerized pressure filter at La Marie to sustain water production at La Marie Water Treatment Plant which services the Upper Mare aux Vacoas water distribution system;
- (e) sharing of water at St Antoine Springs to supplement the regions of Albion and Gros Cailloux;
- (f) taking over of eight private boreholes by the CWA at Valriche Bel Ombre, Plaine Magnien, Eau Bleue, Petit Bois, Trou d'Eau Douce and Valton;
- (g) drilling of new boreholes in the coming months to alleviate the water situation in the regions of Dagotière, Alma, Hollyrood, Solferino and Palma.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are immediate measures that have been put in place to alleviate the situation and bring additional water in the distribution system in the south west, western, central plateau, eastern and northern regions.

I have also personally requested the Contractor undertaking pipe laying works at Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes to expedite works so that same are completed by the end of November 2020. These works will allow connection with Bagatelle Dam for an improved distribution in the regions of Quatre Bornes, Rose Hill, Beau Bassin and Coromandel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to add that, in spite of these efforts, given the meteorological conditions and with a view to managing the water levels on a precautionary basis, the CWA has no alternative than to control the hours of water distribution, hence the interruption in water supply. It is however ensured that water interruptions are regularly communicated to the public so that necessary precautions can be taken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard now to Parliamentary Question B/696, I am informed by the CWA that water is supplied on the basis of District Water Supply Zones and not by Constituencies. La Caverne and Phoenix are supplied with the Upper Mare Aux Vacoas Supply Zone. These regions receive water from La Marie Water Treatment Plant which is itself fed from the Mare Aux Vacoas reservoir.

Some regions have been supplied with potable water on a 24/7 basis since 2010 following upgrading of rapid filters at La Marie Water Treatment Plant and re-zoning of water supply system representing 15 percent of the total number of households in Constituency No 15. The normal hours of supply for other regions in Constituency No 15 are 12 hours per day. It is planned to further increase the supply to 18 hours daily in some regions with new measures to be put in place.

With regard to the reasons for the water cuts and to the recent water supply problems encountered in certain regions in the Upper Mare Aux Vacoas region, these are mostly attributed to repairs, maintenance and connection works on the network, for which, CWA regularly informs the public regarding planned disruptions. It is to be noted that at present the water production at La Marie Water treatment plant is its normal capacity, that is, 130,000 m³ daily.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to PQ B/701, the villages in the Constituency No. 6 fall under the Northern District Water Supply Zone. As for the number of complaints registered for the region of Grand Baie/Poudre d'Or, these concern mainly broken main, broken communication pipe, no water and low pressure. I am informed by the CWA that the total number of complaints received for the period January 2020 to 30 October 2020 stands at 6952, including 79 complaints received for broken communication pipe, 435 in respect of

broken mains or no water, 28 for broken mains and complaints relating to no water and no pressure stands at 6410.

The areas mostly affected were Goodlands, Grand Gaube, Roche Terre, Upper Vale and Sottise. As I indicated earlier, as part of the Contingency Plan, the following remedial measures have been taken to address the water shortage in the immediate term -

- (i) Containerized pressure filters are being installed at New Goodlands and Mon Loisir Rouillard reservoir sites and additional water will be tapped from irrigation pipeline and treated via such pressure filters and injected in the New Goodlands Reservoir and Mon Loisir Reservoir to improve the water supply in terms of pressure.
- (ii) The possibility of extracting water from a potential source of water located at Grand Marée is being considered and such water will be diverted to the Old Goodlands Reservoir for distribution in the regions of Roche Terre, Grand Gaube, Calodyne and adjoining areas.

These measures, Mr Speaker, Sir, will contribute in improving water supply from 10 to 12 hours daily in some regions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to PQ B/706 pertaining to Vallée Pitot and surrounding, which fall under Port Louis Distribution zone, I am informed that this region is supplied with potable water from Upper Monneron Reservoir which receives 19,000 m³ per day of treated water from Pailles Water Treatment Plant via New Plaine Lauzun Pumping Station. The hours of supply for the regions of Lower Vallée Pitot is 10 hours per day.

I am informed by the CWA that the reason for the intermittent water supply in the regions of Vallée Pitot is due to inadequacy of volume of water being pumped from Priest Peak and Upper Monneron Service Reservoirs from the New Plaine Lauzun Pumping Station as well as the limited carrying capacity of the existing 450 mm diameter DI pumping mains which also supplies the regions of Roche Bois, St Croix, Carreau Lalo in Vallée des Prêtres and part of Plaine Verte via Priest Peak Reservoir.

With a view to improving the hours of water supply in the service zones of Upper Monneron reservoir and Priest Peak reservoir, the CWA is proposing to lay a dedicated pipeline of 350mm dia DI pipe over a length of 4.825km from New Plaine Lauzun Pumping station to Upper Monneron, while keeping the existing 450mm dia pumping main to Priest Peak Reservoir. The implementation of this project will be closely monitored.

It is to be added that the pumping capacity of the Plaine Lauzun Pumping Station has already been upgraded to cater for pumping of additional water to Upper Monneron Reservoir and Priest Peak Reservoir.

These measures will lead to an improvement in water distribution from 10 to 24 hours daily in some regions.

With regard to water supply service via water tankers, same is undertaken on a daily basis upon request. I wish to add that for religious festivals, water tankers are deployed to fill water tanks of religious institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will conclude by saying that we are having to manage with the deficiency in rainfall as currently we are heavily dependent on rainfall for our surface and ground water sources. The Contingency Plan has adopted immediate and short term measures to alleviate the situation.

Mobilisation of additional water resources have been identified and will be exploited, for example, water used for hydropower generation, desalination of water, among others. Other medium and long-term measures have also been recommended and will be put in place before the next dry season.

The CWA will pursue its communication and sensitisation campaign for a more judicious use of water resources, particularly during the dry season.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is still the case that more than 50% of potable water are lost through leakage in the distribution system of the CWA? Is it still the case?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not part of the question that the hon. Member has asked, but it is the case at present.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you Minister for your answer. With regard to PQ B/706 which you gave a very detailed answer, one of the main concerns of the inhabitants of that particular area has been that tankers which were supposed to be supplied when there are water cuts are not entertained through the Central Water Authority hotline. You are surely aware of your

predecessor, who in 2018 had a very fierce criticism of the hotlines regarding the Tel Operators. I would request, because the effective arm of supplying...

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Dr. Aumeer: The question is coming, yes, just one. The effective arm of solving issues when it comes to water cuts are the Central Water Authority Inspectors. Will the Minister ensure a better communication and strategic approach between the Tele Agents on the hotline and the Inspectors so that the public at large can benefit from a rapid response service whenever there are cuts? Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: I thank the hon. Member for his question. We have put in place a rapid service system at the level of the CWA that has a direct link with the call centre. We are also at the same time reviewing and restructuring the CEB's facilities which deal with the hotline of the CWA.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: *Yes*, M. le président. En écoutant le ministre répondre à ma question B/717, M. le président, on voit que le ministre a hérité d'un héritage catastrophique du précédent ministre.

Mr Speaker: Put your question, hon. Member!

Mr Assirvaden: I am coming.

Mr Speaker: Supplementary question; put your question!

Mr Assirvaden: J'y viens. Le ministre est sûrement au courant qu'en 2014, il y a eu la promesse de 24/7. Est-ce que le ministre peut, aujourd'hui, dans cette Chambre, dire à la population qui nous écoute, au-delà des sécheresses qu'on a tous les ans, quand est-ce que ce gouvernement va pouvoir donner de l'eau 24/7, pas selon la définition du Premier ministre, mais 24/7, selon la définition de la population?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, supplying the population with water on a 24/7 basis does not mean that the consumer will get water supply 24 hours. We should understand that very often, we intervene to repair faults on our network. So, that does not mean that when we said that it will be on a 24-hour basis, that every CWA customer will receive on a daily basis a 24-hour supply of water. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have moved a lot with regard to supplying the consumers of this country on a 24/7 basis. In certain regions, it is a reality, but we should also understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in certain regions, we have very, very

old pipes. We have removed and replaced a lot of those pipes, but we still have works ahead and we will do the works so that the whole island will benefit from that 24/7 water supply on a daily basis.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his answer.

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Dr. Gungapersad: The question is regarding remedial measures. I am referring to cistern lorries. Very often, these lorries are sent to some locations at the expense of the others. I will just ask a fairer way of doing that; that is all I am asking the hon. Minister. Because some people perceive it as a discrimination when they do not get it. Thank you.

Mr Lesjongard: I thank the hon. Member for his question. We are at present reviewing the whole system of water distribution by water tankers. The water tankers have been fitted with a GPS tractor and we are monitoring whenever they are being requested to deliver water to certain areas.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister has made mention of several medium and long-term measures to address the problem, but there are more pressing concerns. Is the hon. Minister aware that the CWA is so highly indebted that it cannot even pay those private water tanker contractors and/or the millions of money so that these private contractors are refusing to offer their services to the CWA in order to provide water in regions that are affected. Is the hon. Minister aware of this?

Mr Lesjongard: I thank the hon. Member for his question. Not at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. Nobody is refusing to provide water tankers to the CWA. At present, all those who were providing water tankers are still providing those water tankers to the CWA. I understand that there are delays with regard to payments, but we are trying to improve that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I would allow the questions B/700 and B/710 to be answered by the Attorney General as he is taken up. So, hon. Ameer Meea!

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL – COMPENSATION/INSURANCE CLAIMS

(No. B/700) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the wreck of the MV Wakashio Vessel, he will state if the professionals to assist in the preparation of the compensation/insurance claims have already been appointed and if so, indicating the terms of reference thereof.

The Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Gobin): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and thank you, hon. Members for agreeing to this slight change of planning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose to reply to PQ B/700 and PQ B/710 together and I propose also to reply in the following order –

Firstly, on the claim for expenses incurred by Government and Ministries;

Second, on claims from individuals and other entities, and

Thirdly, claims based on future assessment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, on expenses incurred by Government and Ministries; in connection with the grounding of MV Wakashio and the ensuing oil spill, all the relevant claims are being compiled by the Accountant General's Office and thereafter will be submitted to the Ministry of Blue Economy for onward submission to the insurers of MV Wakashio. The Accountant General's Office has informed that around Rs110 m. of claims have been submitted by Government and public bodies as at date, comprising of about Rs95 m. of claims which have already been incurred and around Rs15 m. of claims which have been earmarked and committed.

With regard to claims by individuals and other entities, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that a mechanism has been put in place to facilitate the submission of claims by members of the public in connection with expenses incurred with respect to the grounding of MV Wakashio and the ensuing oil pollution. The Ministry of Blue Economy has launched an e-platform on Friday 14 August 2020 on the website of the said Ministry in order to enable any person or entity who has sustained a loss or damage as a consequence of the said grounding and ensuing oil spill to submit his or her claim to the Ministry of Blue Economy for analysis before onward transmission to the insurers of MV Wakashio.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Blue Economy has also had working sessions at the level of Citizen's Advice Bureau in Bois des Amourettes, Plaine Magnien, Bel Air Rivière Sèche as well as the Social Welfare Centre of Mahébourg from Wednesday 26 August 2020 to Friday 11 September 2020, to receive claims from the general public. As at 29 October, 2,998 such claims have been compiled amounting to a total of about Rs1.4 billion and they are made up of several categories, namely, clean-up operations - 114 claims; preventive measures - 9 claims; property damage - 75 claims; loss in fisheries and related activities - 1,360 claims; loss in tourism activities - 818 claims and other sundries - 622 claims, totalling 2,998. At this stage, those claims are being screened and assessed by a team of analysts from the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with other officers of the Ministry of Blue Economy. My office is providing an overall supervision to this multi-disciplinary team for assessment of these claims.

Now, on the third part, concerning claims to be based on future assessment, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has enlisted the participation of a consortium comprising the World Bank, the UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank to carry out a Post Disaster Needs Assessment, a PDNA. There are ongoing consultations between Government and the said consortium and I do not want to say more at this stage. After the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, the claim on environmental, social and economic impact will be put together in a document for claims to be made to the insurers of MV Wakashio. So, in answer to the specific question as to whether professionals have been appointed apart from the said consortium I have mentioned, composed of the World Bank, UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank, no professional has been appointed for insurance claims.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had some information from the hon. Minister concerning claims in relation to marine ecosystem and environmental, etc. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister, what is the time frame are we looking at to compile all the claims, the list of claims that the hon. Minister just gave to the House? What is the time frame? And the more so, I am surprised that Government has not engaged any professional to assist in making those claims, because you must have specific information, specific expertise to do such claims, it's not an ordinary claim. That's the point I want to make.

Mr Gobin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make the difference between the assessment of the damage and the claim. And I also wish to make the difference between the expenses which have been incurred as opposed to an analysis. For expenses which have been incurred, the work is ongoing, but that will be completed in a very near future, because we have the figures of those sums which have been incurred. For the assessment of environmental damage, the social impact, this will require the assistance of professionals, indeed, and this is why I said that Government has engaged the services of a consortium, not one but a whole consortium of professionals, we have solicited from not one but four international institutions, I repeat World Bank, the UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Can I ask the hon. Attorney General with regard to claims from individuals, I am talking about fishermen, skippers, they are people who are relatively poor, now is Government going to assist them by providing them legal advice so that they can concretely come up with claims that can be entertained by the insurance company?

Mr Gobin: Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the reason why the E-platform was set up, this is the reason why working sessions were held at the CAB in Bois des Amourettes, Plaine Magnien, Bel Air Rivière Sèche and the Social Welfare Centre of Mahébourg, is to gather the claim, to gather necessary documentation, for example, their receipts of past earnings, and this is why I said also that these claims are being assessed by a team of analysts from the Ministry of Finance. In short, we are building case files and then for onward transmission. I understand my colleagues are saying we would need to claim. These claims take time invariably as there are actual expenses incurred in the first place, but then post assessment claims will take time. If we look at the claims in previous oil spills in other countries, some have taken 10 years or more. I don't foresee that it will take that long in view of the ongoing discussions, but it will take some fair amount of time.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes. Can I ask the hon. Minister, is it true to say that Japan has offered its financial assistance to the Government of Mauritius but the Government of Mauritius has refused this assistance?

Mr Gobin: No, this is not the case at all. I want to make the difference between what is happening with the Wakashio case involving owners, charterers, insurers who are

basically private entities and the G-to-G negotiations, the Government of Mauritius and the Government of Japan are, indeed, in negotiations. We have not refused any help; there are ongoing discussions at very high level, beyond my level, I should say.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – PHASE II

(No. B/697) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to phase II of the Metro Express project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to –

- (a) when part of the Vacoas Market fair will be demolished,
- (b) the duration of the construction works thereof,
- (c) the immediate measures being taken to alleviate traffic congestion during the construction phase, and
- (d) the impact thereof on the surrounding environment, including green spaces and trees, indicating the measures envisaged for the restoration thereof.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that rail and road works are being undertaken along the Sivananda Road from its junction St Paul Road near CEB up to Stevenson Avenue which run parallel to the Vacoas Market. The Metro Express alignment will be constructed on the existing Sivananda Avenue and therefore, is not impacting directly on the Vacoas Market place.

However, to cater and maintain the road traffic capacity in light of the Metro Express Project thereat, the Road Development Authority is constructing a two lane 7m wide road with amenities, such as drains, footpath, signages and so on, by the side of the Vacoas Market from St Paul Road to Palmerstone over a length of 2km.

Transinvest Mauritius Ltd has been awarded the contract for an amount of Rs342,683,000, excluding VAT. The works have already started on site on 14 August 2020 and the whole project is expected to be completed by 05 February 2022.

Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix that with the implementation of the Palmerstone Project by the RDA as part of its traffic decongestion programme, a new route layout would be constructed next to the existing Sivananda Avenue at Vacoas.

To that effect, part of the Vacoas Fair, along Sivananda Avenue would be demolished and provision has already been made to temporarily relocate some of the stallholders, namely, the seasonal fruits stalls and cooked food kiosks on part of a plot of land along Greenville Drive, which was previously occupied by the SMF Quarters.

Furthermore, I am informed that the Council will provide additional parking spaces on the said plot of land along Greenville Drive for the stallholders.

The stallholders concerned, namely, the seasonal fruits stalls and cooked food kiosk, would be relocated by mid-November 2020 once the Council completes the administrative procedures. As soon as the stallholders are relocated, demolition works will start. The contractor of RDA has agreed to undertake the demolition works and part of the relocation works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that only part of the market fair will be demolished along Sivananda Avenue. I am informed by the RDA that the duration of the demolition works will be for a period of two weeks, depending on the finalisation of the administrative procedures by the Council for relocation of the holders of the stalls.

As regards the other major part of the market fair, its removal and construction will be addressed as part of the Vacoas Urban Terminal Project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed that presently, two lanes are available for movement of vehicles. As recommended by the authorities, namely TMRSU, Mauritius Police Force and Metro Express Limited (MEL) two lanes capacity will always be maintained during the construction works and therefore no major traffic disruption is expected.

Moreover, Police is helping to man traffic at intersections. I wish to add that the parkings along Sivananda Avenue from its junction with Saint Paul Road and Stevenson Avenue have been cancelled and relocated to the site earmarked for the park and ride area which will form part of the Urban Terminal on Stevenson Avenue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as part (d) of the question is concerned, I am informed by MEL that the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning and the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management are working on the implementation of the Vacoas Urban Terminal and master planning to bring forth sustainable development for the whole area of Vacoas-Phoenix.

According to RDA, some trees located on the edge of the Market will be cut down and to compensate for the loss, additional trees will be planted by the RDA in the vicinity of the Market Fair under the guidance of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of the Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

Mr X.L. Duval: May I ask hon. Minister Ganoo, how come within the same Government, he is answering a question relating to Metro Express Limited, a limited company governed by a Board of Directors, whereas his colleague next to him, refuses to answer a question on MIC Limited, also governed by a Board of Directors and a company? Can he explain what is the Government policy; one is hiding, the other one is giving information?

Mr Speaker: This is not a supplementary question! I object to that. Next supplementary, hon. Ms Bérenger!

Mr X.L. Duval: *Incroyable sa matlo! Laurel et Hardy !*

Ms Bérenger: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In reply to my PQ B/552, it was said that the stallholders at the Vacoas Market and representatives of the Vacoas Fair have been informed of the integration of the Vacoas Market into the Vacoas Urban Terminal Project and that they are agreeable to that. Can we know from the hon. Minister how and when, those concerned, have been informed of that decision?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, what is going to happen in fact is that the Market Fair will form part of the Vacoas Urban Terminal in due time. With the construction of the Vacoas Urban Terminal, the Market Fair will be shifted at the back and the front part of the present Market Fair will become part of the Vacoas Urban Terminal and discussions will have to start with the different economic operators for their relocations, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

You have a supplementary question? I gave you the floor and you refused. You shared your question to the honourable.

Mr X.L. Duval: Is it a crime? It's not a crime!

Mr Speaker: Go ahead!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are around 10 to 15 trees, what we are call ‘*pied camphre*’, which are more than 100 years old, that are to be cut down, to disappear to make way to concrete infrastructure. Will this be taken into account to preserve same in this concept of Vacoas Urban Terminal? Will this be part of this concept that the Minister was praising for earlier on?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, some trees will unfortunately have to be cut down. But I said also, to compensate for the loss, in fact, the ratio is 1:3, so, additional trees will be planted by the RDA. Now, all this will be done, Mr Speaker, Sir, under the guidance, the supervision, under the advice of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of Environment. I am sure the minimal damage will be done to the trees and if it is able to protect or to save some of these trees, I am sure the authorities will surely do it.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

COVID-19 SOLIDARITY FUND - FUNDS COLLECTED

(No. B/698) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information, as to the –

- (a) total amount of funds collected; and
- (b) number of the beneficiaries thereunder, indicating the amount disbursed thereto as at to date.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, j’ai été informé, qu’à la date du 30 octobre 2020, le *COVID-19 Solidarity Fund* a collecté 328, 712, 321,19 roupies et a déboursé un montant total de 134, 266,500 roupies.

En ce qui concerne les bénéficiaires, les fonds ont été déboursés de la façon suivante –

- i. respectivement 100 millions de roupies et 9,345,000 roupies pour contribuer au paiement de l’allocation spéciale accordée aux *frontliners* pour Maurice et Rodrigues;
- ii. 19,572,500 roupies versées à 12 ONG;

- iii. 4 millions de roupies pour le ministère de la Santé et du Bien-être pour le nettoyage et la désinfection des espaces publics ainsi que pour des campagnes de sensibilisation COVID-19 audio-visuelles.
- iv. 125,000 roupies pour le ministère du Tourisme pour financer les arrangements logistiques faits au niveau des centres de quarantaine, et
- v. 1, 200,000 roupies pour soutenir 240 ménages qui ont été affectés par la COVID-19. Chaque ménage a reçu un montant de 5,100 roupies.

M. le président, je dépose la liste des ONG bénéficiaires.

Au regard des bénéficiaires particuliers, il ne serait pas approprié d'en révéler les noms. Merci.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the hon. Minister gave the figure, I think of Rs100 m. given to frontliners. Can I ask him if he can define 'frontliners'? Who are the categories of frontliners that have benefited this Rs100 m.?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, c'est la question B/699, je vais répondre là-dessus après.

Mr Ameer Meea: Let's hope. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister what has been the selection process of beneficiaries, I mean, what criteria has been used to select the beneficiaries?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, le membre pose-t-il la question concernant les *frontliners*?

Mr Ameer Meea: Non, les ONG.

Dr. Padayachy: Pour les ONG ?

Mr Ameer Meea: I am not asking the names.

Dr. Padayachy: Les ONG - ça été fait par rapport au Conseil d'administration de ce fonds. Ils ont reçu des demandes et ils ont attribué en fonction de leur classification. Je vais prendre les informations, que je n'ai pas avec moi, concernant cette demande et je reviendrai vers le membre.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. According to the mission statement of COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, the first mission is to alleviate suffering during and in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic. Yet we have just heard from the hon. Minister that, out of Rs320 m. collected by this Fund only Rs1.2 m., not even 1% has been used for direct payment to people who have suffered directly from COVID-19. So, does he not agree that the mission is now being diverted and funds are being used to finance expenses of Government, like the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health and paying frontliners?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je répète mais 110 millions été versées au *frontliners* qui ont été en première ligne concernant la pandémie de COVID-19 et ça été la mission première de *COVID-19 Solidarity Fund* et aussi on a versé presque 20 millions à 12 ONG et, comme je l'ai dit, il y a plusieurs autres catégories qui ont touché cet argent. Comme je le rappelle, on est toujours avec cette pandémie et il y en aura, il y a d'autres cas qui vont venir. C'est pour cela qu'il ne débourse pas aussi facilement, et je répète il y a un conseil d'administration, il y a un comité qui est régi par, qui est sous la présidence de monsieur Raj Makoond qui regarde de près avant de déboursé cet argent. C'est pas déboursé de manière si facile comme on pourrait le croire, comme feraient dire certains mais il y a un comité qui décide en fonction de certains critères et nous, au ministère, on ne rentre pas dans ces critères. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Ameer Meea!

FRONTLINERS - BENEFICIARIES - ALLOWANCE

(No. B/699) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the proposed payment of an allowance of Rs15,000 to the frontliners who were mobilized during the curfew period, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state –

- (a) the number of beneficiaries thereof, indicating the –
 - (i) Ministries/Departments to which they are attached, and
 - (ii) cost involved, and
- (b) if request for payment of same to other beneficiaries have been received and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, à ce jour le ministère de la Santé et du Bien-être a présenté des demandes de paiement pour 13,815 membres du personnel hospitalier, dont 319 membres du personnel hospitalier du *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care* et 92 membres du personnel en poste au ministère de la santé et du bien-être qui ont apporté leur soutien pendant la période de confinement.

Des décaissements ont été effectués en faveur de 11,158 membres du personnel hospitalier pour un montant de 167,4 millions de roupies. Pour les 2,657 autres membres du personnel hospitalier, la demande qui a été soumise le jeudi 29 octobre 2020 est en cours d'examen par le *COVID-19 Solidarity Fund*. Le ministère de la Santé et du Bien-être indiqué que le critère pris en compte était la présence pendant le confinement.

M. le président, un montant de 186,4 millions de roupies a déjà été versé à 12,424 policiers, y compris les policiers en poste à Rodrigues. Le département de la police a également indiqué que le critère utilisé était la présence pendant le confinement.

De plus un montant de 9,4 millions de roupies a été payé à 623 membres du personnel de l'hôpital de Rodrigues.

M. le président, des propositions ont été reçues pour le paiement d'indemnités à d'autres employés du gouvernement. Toutefois, à ce stade, le paiement des indemnités est destiné aux catégories d'employés annoncés dans le discours du budget à savoir les policiers et personnel hospitalier ayant été mobilisé pendant la période de confinement. Merci.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes. Mr Speaker, the House and the nation will recall that fire fighters and refuse collectors were called upon for assistance during the lockdown period, and many others. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance if he can see to it that these two categories that I have just mentioned be also included to receive this allocation of Rs15,000 because they also form part of frontliners. As we recall fire fighters were being called to work in supermarkets where there was a curfew period.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, pendant la période budgétaire, il y a eu des discussions avec les membres du gouvernement concernant les *frontliners*, ceux qui étaient devant et comment on fait pour le paiement d'une indemnité au *frontliners*, et nous avons décidé au vu des moyens limités, au vu des finances publiques de limiter ces indemnités à ceux qui ont pris le plus de risques pendant ce période de confinement en tout cas parlant des officiers de la fonction publique. Cela a été annoncé dans le budget 2020/2021 que cela sera pour les policiers et le personnel hospitalier ayant été présents pendant le confinement. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether any arrangements have been made for frontliners working in the private health institutions who contributed as well during the peak of COVID-19 where some of the institutions were accommodating positive cases? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je viens de parler que c'était pour les officiers de la fonction publique et on ne parlait pas de ceux qui travaillaient dans le secteur privé. Pour le secteur privé, on avait fait un appel à *Business Mauritius* de faire part à ses membres de payer cette indemnité parce que ce sont eux qui doit payer les salaires. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

CWA - CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/701) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Constituency No. 6, Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the -

- (a) number of complaints registered on the hotline since January 2020 to date in relation to the erratic water supply on a 24/7 basis thereat;
- (b) areas which are mostly affected, and
- (c) remedial measures taken in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/696)

GRADE 1 PUPILS - ADMISSION

(No. B/702) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the changes in the age of admission of children ranging between 5 to 6 years in Grade 1 in 2021, she will state if –

- (a) prior consultations with stakeholders were held and, if so, when and with whom, and
- (b) a thorough pedagogical impact assessment thereof was carried out and, if so, table copy thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): I wish, at the very outset, to highlight that it has always been the policy of the Ministry of Education to admit a child who has attained the age of five to Grade 1. There has been no change in the age of admission of children to Grade 1. This was reflected in section 10 of the Education Regulations which previously provided that a child should attain the age of five by the 31 December in the year preceding that in which he seeks admission to Grade 1. In any given year, on admission, pupils' age usually varies between 5 to 6 years.

As the House knows with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school calendar has been reviewed. It has been readjusted and will henceforth start in June and end in March of the following year. With the new school calendar, provision has been made by my Ministry for necessary adjustments where required so that all children having reached the age of five by 31 May 2021 will be admitted to Grade 1 in the next school year 2021/2022. The Education Regulations have been amended for that purpose.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that discussions were held at the Ministry on the practical implication thereof and consultations were engaged with the main stakeholders which are the BCCCA, the MIE which is the pedagogical arm of my Ministry and also the GTU.

As regards part (b) of the question, the MIE, which has carefully assessed the implications of the change in the school calendar, has confirmed that there will be no adverse pedagogical impact on the learners.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the House that it has been a policy to have learners admitted to Grade 1 at the age of five as it is in line with the developmental needs of the child. Pupils entering Grade 1 are normally at varying developmental stages. This explains why Primary School Program at Grade 1 makes provision for all children to undergo a profiling using the primary school readiness tools at the start of the Grade. This allows the teacher to gauge the child's readiness and take any necessary action to prepare the child for the Grade 1 Program.

Let me reassure the hon. Members that all decisions taken by my Ministry are in the best interests of the child taking into account that we are living an exceptional situation.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: With reference to part (a) of the question, I would like to request the hon. Minister - because there has been an outcry from the Association of Private Pre-Primary Schools Managers who has complained that no consultation took place with them, if the hon. Minister could look into matter and register their views as well.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have received a number of letters from various operators and we have noted what were their queries and what were their apprehensions but it is to be noted that all these have been taken care of. And the major issue that they were raising was that students will be leaving their schools earlier but on the other hand, we have to note that children who were to be admitted in Grade I in January will remain in the school during the third term which has been extended.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister how her Ministry will deal with the mixed ability issue that will arise as there will be children with different age groups, 5, 6 and 6 and a half years together?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is in fact a situation that arises every year because some students would have reached the age of 5 much earlier while others may have reached the age of 5 on the eve, let us say on the 31st or one day before. So, that is why I have been saying that we have the learners' profile that is determined and we go for the school readiness assessment prior to starting the program and anyway in certain schools, where you have more than one section, normally students are grouped according to the month in which they are born.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. In regard to the last supplementary question, Mr Speaker, Sir, will the problem now be more pronounced because we are advancing the date by three months which is March? So, the *décalage*, three months for a child in an age group of 5 years old is quite a lot. So, will that not lead to a situation different from previous years because of this *décalage*?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this year, exceptionally, there will be a larger number of students but this is exceptionally for this year. Now, we at the level of the Ministry, we have already worked out the number of seats available and all. As far as the students are concerned, the pedagogical issues are concerned, care will be taken at the level of the schools and the teachers, I have just mentioned, that a student profiling is done, there is

a school readiness program that is carried out and then only the program is started. I must say that in the pre-primary it is the preparation for the entry at primary level. So, I believe that if proper attention is given and care taken at the level of Grade I prior to starting the Grade I program, the students will not have any difficulty in covering their course.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary question!

Dr. Gungapersad: I follow the hon. Minister very well. Now, in cases where we have only one section and students who have not been able to complete the pre-primary cycle, these kids along with others who have completed the cycle this may cause problem. I think it is very important we address this issue so that they are not disadvantaged.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I have made it clear that prior to starting the programme, the teachers in Grade I will have to do the profiling of the students and will also have to ensure their readiness before starting the programme and special attention will be given to these students. I must draw the attention of the House that we have already started an Early Support Programme in our primary schools where apart from the class teacher, you also have a support teacher to assist the teacher to ensure that no child is left behind and any learning difficulties shown by the child is taken care of.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

POINTE AUX CANNONIERS BEACH - FILAO TREES - FELLING

(No. B/703) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the filao trees on the beach of Pointe Aux Cannoniers, he will state if permission was recently granted to allow the felling thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 - FISHERS - FISHING LICENCES

(No. B/704) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No. 6, Grand’Baie and Poudre d’Or, he will state the number of Fishing Licences –

- (a) issued to fishers since January 2020 to date, indicating the eligibility criteria therefor, and

(b) not yet processed.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that my Ministry issues fishing licences to semi-industrial fishing boats of less than 24 metres and industrial fishing vessels operating on the banks as well as to industrial purse seiners and long liners operating in the exclusive economic zone of Mauritius.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since January 2020 to date, my Ministry has issued three fishing licences in respect of semi-industrial boats namely Royal Phoenix I, Royal Phoenix II of Babul and Sons Fishing Company Ltd and legacy of Ice 2 Ice fishing Company Ltd owned by two operators residing in Grand Bay.

The eligibility criteria for the licencing of local fishing boats are as follows –

- (a) the boat should be registered under the Mauritian flag;
- (b) it should have not been used in contravention of local, regional and international conservation and management measures;
- (c) it should be seaworthy;
- (d) the boat or vessel and its crew should have a valid insurance cover;
- (e) it should have a valid ship station licence issued by the information and communication technologies Authority;
- (f) it should have a transponder installed on board and should be registered on the vessel monitoring system for daily vessel monitoring system reporting, and
- (g) moreover, the operator should submit proof of installation of Automatic Identification System onboard the fishing vessel.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that all application for fishing licences received at my Ministry as at date have already been processed and there is no pending application.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

**SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT –
COVID-19 LABORATORY**

(No. B/705) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the COVID-19 Laboratory at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will state if –

- (a) any other tests are conducted thereat other than PCR – RT COVID-19;
- (b) provisions have been made for Quality assurance, indicating if any comparison in terms of false negative and false positive have been conducted with accredited foreign World Health Organisation laboratory, and
- (c) a doctor will be posted on a full time basis thereat to arrange clinical screening of high risk symptomatic in-bound passengers for the purpose of early segregation.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that my Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Airport Terminal Operations Ltd on 08 October 2020 for the operations of the Airport Health laboratory. The Airport Health laboratory has been set up by the ATOL and became operational as from 15 October 2020. It is currently carrying out PCR tests for COVID-19 on all the incoming passengers on their first day of arrival, that is, Day 0.

No other tests except PCR for COVID-19 are being performed at the Airport Health Laboratory.

As at 29 October 2020, a total of 1508 passengers have been tested for COVID-19, out of whom 7 were detected positive.

To ensure the quality of the tests, AHL is presently participating in an inter lab comparison with Molecular Biology Department of the Central Health laboratory of my Ministry. A total of 1023 tests have been performed on samples provided for the validation and quality assurance purposes. There was 100% concordance on the results between Airport Health Laboratory and the Molecular Biology Laboratory of Central Health Laboratory.

Airport Health Laboratory is also in the process of enrolling in an External Quality Assurance Scheme (EQAS) with the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) of Johannesburg, South Africa, which is a WHO designated reference laboratory.

As regards paragraph (c), the medical unit at the Airport of Mauritius comprising of one Medical Health Officer, the Regional Public Health Superintendent and Nursing staff are posted on a 24-hour basis for screening of all inbound passengers. Regarding high risks

passengers, alert is sent to the airport Doctor through the control tower. The sanitary officer and the rapid response team take charge of the passenger once the plane is landed. The patient is immediately isolated. The swab team perform the COVID-19 test at the airport itself. The patient is then admitted in an isolation ward pending the COVID-19 test result.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The majority of COVID-19 positive cases since opening of the border have been attributed to incoming passengers coming from abroad who, I understand, had a negative PCR reverse transcription test before boarding. Has the Ministry conducted an inquiry to see whether those who embark had the test from *bona fide* accredited WHO Labs in the countries where they embark and whether original reports of COVID-19 were submitted to the relevant authorities before embarkation considering that it has raised concern even among the coordinator at the PMO regarding the recent flight from Emirates on 24 October with a more than the average high and usual positive cases on flight?

Dr. Jagutpal: Thank you, hon. Member. The test done prior to embarkation has to be negative. Between the time the test is performed and when the passenger boards the plane, there is a possibility that he gets infected as it takes nearly 14 days for the virus to develop in the system. That has totally the possibility of happening because it takes nearly 14 days for the virus to develop in the system. So, we can have somebody who has done the test before embarkation and, after coming to Mauritius, the test is positive.

Now, the second part of the question, yes, we have an accredited lab; we validate foreign results coming from accredited labs by the WHO so we consider those results to be the genuine results.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister, out of all the positive imported cases, whether his Ministry has determined how many false positive cases exist amongst those imported positive cases?

Dr. Jagutpal: Now, imported positive cases, we detect them either at the day 0, day 7 or day 14, now all the tests have been subject to repeat tests, and all have proved to be positive. So, the question of whether those positive tests at later stage been revealed negative, this question does not arise.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House of the list of specific investigations done with the symptomatic patients?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. The symptomatic patients: the tests done include the routine test, full blood count, chest x-rays, tests for the CT scan, whenever it is needed.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Dr. Aumeer: Will the Minister give consideration to having rapid antigen test for the newly claimed test, the LAMP test, which is Loop-mediated Isothermal Amplification test, for rapid identification of potential positive cases coming from very high-risk countries, considering the inevitable option of opening borders fully in the future? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, in fact, the Central Laboratory is conducting the antigen test with the patients who are being tested positive. This is because we can at the same time have a statistical value of how many patients, have already developed the antigens but who are still tested positive. These tests are being done by the Central Lab services.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

VALLÉE PITOT - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/706) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the regions of Vallée Pitot, particularly along Boulevard Pitot, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –

- (a) reasons for the repetitive interruptions of domestic water supply thereat over the last few years, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to ensure a prompt water supply through tankers thereat, especially on Fridays and religious festivals.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/696)

REVISED ESTIMATES - YEAR 2020-2021

(No. B/707) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the economy, he will give a revised estimates thereof for the year 2020-2021 in respect of the –

- (a) Gross Domestic Product;

- (b) rate of unemployment;
- (c) Public Sector Debt;
- (d) total estimated revenue and expenditure;
- (e) budget deficit, and
- (f) the balance of payments, indicating how they compare to the figures stated in the budget speech.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, le Budget 2020-2021 a été préparé dans des circonstances économiques inédites, en pleine pandémie de la COVID-19.

Nous surveillons de façon continue l'évolution de la situation tant au niveau international que local. Nous sommes également en dialogue constant avec les organisations internationales ainsi que les parties prenantes locales.

Sur le plan international, la situation évolue rapidement et devient de plus en plus incertaine. À la mi-octobre, le FMI a révisé ses projections de croissance et prévoit désormais une contraction de 4,4 % de l'économie mondiale.

Cette révision représente une détérioration de plus de 50% par rapport au chiffre de 3% initialement prévu par le FMI en avril 2020. Pour rappel, c'est sur la base de ce scénario qu'a été préparé le Budget 2020-2021.

Dans son rapport de Septembre 2020, l'OCDE a quant à elle prévu une contraction de la croissance mondiale de l'ordre de 4,5%.

Il est important de souligner que ces prévisions de fin septembre pour l'OCDE et de début octobre pour le FMI sont basées sur des scénarii très optimistes qui n'envisagent pas de confinements au second semestre 2020.

Or, nous savons aujourd'hui que ces estimations sont obsolètes au regard de la nouvelle donne sanitaire ayant entraîné une vague de reconfinements en Europe.

M. le président, en effet, depuis plusieurs semaines, le monde est secoué par une deuxième vague virulente et meurtrière de la COVID-19. Cela devrait malheureusement aggraver la situation économique à l'échelle internationale. Nos principaux partenaires commerciaux sont gravement touchés et ont donc dû prendre des mesures additionnelles pour freiner la propagation du virus.

Le confinement a un coût direct, mais aussi indirect tout aussi important. En effet, il convient d'ajouter aux coûts visibles de l'arrêt de certaines activités le « coût caché » des dysfonctionnements de la réorganisation des entreprises, de l'angoisse des travailleurs confrontés au virus et de l'adaptation au télétravail.

Il est estimé que ces coûts cachés représentent 50 % à 100 % des coûts visibles.

Cela étant dit, la circulation du virus a elle aussi un important coût économique. C'est ce que suggère le rapport du FMI sur les perspectives économiques mondiales d'octobre 2020. Les prix Nobel d'économie 2019 Banerjee et Duflo confirment eux aussi que la dégradation de la situation épidémique entraîne des répercussions extrêmement néfastes sur la consommation et l'investissement en raison de la perte de confiance.

En effet, la circulation de ce virus possède un impact délétère sur l'activité économique car les agents économiques ne se sentent plus à l'aise pour poursuivre leurs activités normales.

A Maurice, c'est d'ailleurs parce que le virus ne circule plus dans la communauté locale que l'activité économique reprend graduellement, de trimestre en trimestre.

M. le président, alors que les nouvelles mesures de confinement se multiplient en Europe, il est clair que la croissance économique mondiale sera pire que prévu. Il est donc fort probable que le FMI révisé encore une fois à la baisse ses prévisions.

Compte tenu de notre ouverture sur le monde et nos liens avec les pays les plus durement touchés, notre économie est également grandement affectée.

Pour rappel, à Maurice, selon les estimations, chaque semaine de confinement a réduit notre PIB de 1,5 %. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que, pour la période d'avril à juin 2020, l'activité économique se soit contractée de 32,5 % par rapport à la même période l'année dernière. Au premier trimestre 2020, le PIB s'est contracté de 2,6 %. Ainsi, selon nos estimations, pour les six premiers mois de 2020, Maurice a déjà perdu 8,7 % de son PIB.

Un confinement coûte à notre économie plus d'un milliard de roupies par jour et plus la période de confinement est étendue, plus ce chiffre augmente de manière exponentielle.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (a) de la question, pour l'exercice financier 2020-2021, le PIB nominal devrait s'élever à 436,5 milliards de roupies. Le chiffre estimé dans le budget était de 452,3 milliards de roupies. Ces révisions font partie du

processus normal du cycle budgétaire, d'autant plus au regard de la magnitude de la présente crise.

C'est pourquoi, dans un contexte dynamique et changeant, les chiffres du PIB évoluent en fonction de la situation locale et globale.

M. le président, l'économie est avant tout une science sociale, une science qui s'intéresse à l'humain. L'économie doit être au service de la population et non l'inverse.

C'est pourquoi la priorité de ce gouvernement, en cette période de crise sans précédent, je le rappelle, a été et est toujours de prévenir le chômage massif dans le pays et ainsi protéger la vie et les moyens de subsistance de la population.

Ainsi, en ce qui concerne la partie (b), le taux de chômage pour l'année calendaire 2020 devrait être d'environ 8,3 %, soit 50,000 personnes non-employés.

Ce chiffre est inférieur aux 100,000 chômeurs prévus initialement en avril 2020, dû aux effets de la contraction économique.

En fait, grâce au soutien du gouvernement fourni par le biais du *Wage Assistance Scheme* et du *Self-employed Assistance Scheme* ainsi que des mécanismes de soutien mis à disposition via l'*ISP Ltd*, la *DBM Ltd* et *SIC*, nous avons pu empêcher le chômage de masse.

Au niveau international, au cours des derniers mois, dans de nombreux autres pays, les chiffres du chômage ont explosé.

Aux États-Unis, le chômage qui était de 3,7 % en 2019 devrait plus que doubler et atteindre 8,9 % en 2020.

Au Royaume-Uni, le taux de chômage qui était de 3,8 % en 2019 devrait presque tripler d'ici la fin de 2020 pour atteindre 11,4 %.

En France, environ 840,000 emplois, dont près de 730,000 emplois salariés, seraient perdus en 2020, portant le taux de chômage à 9,7 %.

Les mesures prises par le gouvernement mauricien ont en effet permis de contenir le chômage dans le pays. Et permettez-moi d'assurer à l'Assemblée que le gouvernement continuera à soutenir l'emploi et la création d'emplois.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (c) de la question, la dette brute du secteur public serait d'environ 397,1 milliards de roupies et la dette nette du secteur public de 356,9 milliards de roupies.

La dette nette du secteur public en pourcentage du PIB devrait s'élever à 81,8% pour l'année fiscale 2020-2021.

En comparaison, au Royaume-Uni, la dette en pourcentage du PIB devrait passer à 108,5% du PIB.

Aux États-Unis, à 136% du PIB.

En France, à 118,7 % du PIB.

En Italie, à 161,8% du PIB.

Ce ne sont là que quelques exemples. Mais ils montrent comment le rapport dette par rapport au PIB augmente de façon importante dans le monde entier, alors que les pays réagissent à la crise de Covid-19 et soutiennent l'emploi et les entreprises.

A l'échelle mondiale, les niveaux de la dette souveraine ont globalement augmenté pour atteindre un niveau record de 100% du PIB mondial. À Maurice, la dette a augmenté mais elle reste bien en dessous du seuil de 100 %.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (d), les recettes totales devraient s'élever à 161,3 milliards de roupies, contre 162,9 milliards de roupies selon les prévisions budgétaires. Les dépenses totales seront d'environ 165,4 milliards de roupies, contre 162,9 milliards de roupies selon les prévisions budgétaires.

En ce qui concerne la partie (e), le déficit budgétaire devrait s'élever à 4,1 milliards de roupies ce qui représente seulement 0,9% du PIB.

En ces temps incertains, le déficit que nous prévoyons est l'un des plus faibles au monde.

En comparaison, la France a récemment révisé son déficit budgétaire pour 2020 à 11,3 % de son PIB.

Au Royaume-Uni, le montant que le gouvernement doit emprunter pour financer ses dépenses, c'est-à-dire son déficit budgétaire, devrait atteindre 390 milliards de livres pour l'année fiscale en cours, soit 19,6% de son PIB.

Il s'agit du déficit le plus important de l'histoire britannique en temps de paix.

Aux États-Unis, le déficit pour l'année fiscale en septembre 2020 s'élève à 3,100 milliards de dollars, ce qui représente une multiplication par trois par rapport au déficit de 1,000 milliards de dollars de l'année précédente.

Ce ne sont là que quelques exemples de l'augmentation des déficits dans le monde entier. En fait, le déficit révisé estimé à 0,9 % pour Maurice est donc bien l'un des plus minimes si l'on tient compte des effets de la pandémie de Covid-19.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne la partie (f) de la question, je rappelle que la balance des paiements affiche toujours un solde nul. Les avoirs de réserves devraient être en déficit de 34,7 milliards de roupies pour l'année fiscale 2020-2021 contre un déficit prévu de 39 milliards de roupies selon les estimations budgétaires initiales.

Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. X. L. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, the hon. Minister just mentioned the IMF. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has read - I am sure he must have done - the recent Regional Economic Outlook Paper, published by the IMF in October and particularly the third paragraph of page 11, highly, severely critical of the Government of Mauritius and Ghana and Congo, even comparing us to Zimbabwe as to the fact that we have resorted to direct financing by the Bank of Mauritius, reason why the debt has not officially gone up as he is mentioning. Can I get his reaction to this third paragraph of the IMF Report, please?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, encore une fois, ce pays est souverain. Dans le passé, nous avons déjà fait face à certaines critiques du FMI. Le FMI, je ne vais pas critiquer mais les prévisions à chaque fois qu'ils le font, ils doivent le changer presque deux jours après. Nous, en tant que gouvernement responsable, avec une pandémie, nous avons utilisé toutes les recettes disponibles à travers le monde et nous avons utilisé, oui, le *quantitative easing* parce que c'est ce qui se fait à travers le monde, en particulier dans les pays avancés. Donc, pourquoi les pays avancés peuvent l'utiliser, et là, il n'y a pas de critique de la part du FMI, et nous, en tant que pays en voie de développement, on n'a pas le droit d'utiliser ce genre de mécanisme parce qu'on est un pays en voie de développement. Nous, on l'a fait et jusqu'à présent c'est soutenable. Nous n'avons pas eu de hausse de l'inflation qui peut en résulter avec une augmentation de la masse monétaire. Nous n'avons pas eu. Nous avons pu contenir l'inflation, c'est la raison principale pourquoi on a utilisé ce mécanisme. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: The hon. Minister said and he insisted that the unemployment rate will be maintained below 50,000. Now, is the hon. Minister aware that recently, the Statistics Mauritius in collaboration with the World Bank published a Report wherein it is stated that

from March, 129,000 persons have lost employment and that two-third of those are self-employed and 14,000 are the young persons?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, ces chiffres, comme vient de le prévenir l'honorable membre, étaient pendant la période de confinement, et tout le monde sait très bien qu'on a enregistré presque 200,000 *self-employed* qui, oui, ne travaillaient pas pendant la période de confinement et ils ont été enregistrés comme chômeurs parce qu'ils ne travaillaient pas, et depuis, je le rappelle, on a ouvert de nouveau, on n'est plus en confinement et ils ont recommencé à travailler, d'où cette estimation de la part du ministère du Travail.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In regard to unemployment, does the hon. Minister agree that the reason why unemployment has not risen significantly is because a law was passed to prevent dismissal of employees on economic grounds and, as from 01 January, this will no longer be applicable and therefore, does he anticipate that as from 01 January 2021, there would be an increase in dismissal on economic grounds?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, comme je l'ai dit au début de ma réponse, en cette période exceptionnelle, nous devons suivre avec attention ce qui se passe au niveau économique, que ce soit les indicateurs économiques, ou sociale. Oui, il y a des risques au niveau du chômage, je n'ai pas dit le contraire. Au mois d'avril, les prévisions donnaient déjà un chiffre de 100,000 parce qu'une contraction de plus de 10% entraîne automatiquement un doublement du taux de chômage. Nous, on est en train de travailler pour empêcher cela. Oui, le fait qu'on a pris certaines lois mais surtout le fait qu'on a mis en place certaines mesures exceptionnelles, et je le répète, comme le *Wage Assistance Scheme* et le *Self-Employed Assistance Scheme* ont permis de baisser, de limiter le nombre de chômeurs. Mais, on va continuer avec ces mécanismes et on va suivre au jour le jour - je l'ai dit plusieurs fois - mois par mois, ce qui se passe sur le marché du travail pour pouvoir revenir, venir avec des mesures pour lutter contre le chômage. C'est ce qu'on va faire et c'est ce qu'on est en train de faire.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQs B/713, B/720, B/721, B/722 and B/723 have been withdrawn.

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

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

Mr Seeruttun seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time –

- (a) *The Climate Change Bill (No. XIV of 2020)*
- (b) *The Veterinary Council Bill (No. XV of 2020)*

At 4.47 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.38 p.m., with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister Ramano!

*Second Reading***THE CLIMATE CHANGE BILL**

(No. XIV of 2020)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Climate Change Bill (No. XIV of 2020) be read a second time.

M. le président, c'est avec un grand honneur et un profond sentiment de satisfaction que je prends la parole aujourd'hui dans cette auguste Assemblée pour présenter ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique.

Avant de le détailler, permettez-moi de faire une rétrospective des événements clés qui ont façonné la préparation de ce projet de loi si important pour notre pays.

Les membres de cette Assemblée, se rappelleront sûrement que Sir Anerood Jugnauth, alors Premier ministre, a été le premier à jeter les bases pour assurer une gestion

optimale et efficace de l'environnement. Il avait cru dans une dynamique de bonne gouvernance environnementale qui vise à promouvoir le développement durable.

Il avait été le précurseur dans ce domaine et avait, d'ailleurs, initié plusieurs mesures avant même le Sommet de la Terre de Rio en 1992. Ce Sommet avait été en quelque sorte le point de départ du mouvement global pour combattre le changement climatique.

C'était sous sa direction que des mesures concrètes avaient été initiées notamment avec la création d'un Comité National sur l'Environnement en 1987, suivi par la création d'un ministère dédié à la gestion de l'Environnement dès 1989 et avec la promulgation en 1991 de la loi cadre, le « *Environment Protection Act* », qui est d'ailleurs à ce jour, le cadre législatif majeur pour la protection et la gestion de l'environnement à Maurice.

Pour compléter la boucle aujourd'hui, c'est sous la direction du Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, que nous allons franchir une nouvelle étape avec un projet de loi qui aura comme objectif de nous donner les moyens et les outils nécessaires afin de nous préparer plus efficacement à faire face à l'un des défis majeurs globaux de notre époque, c'est-à-dire le changement climatique.

Nous allons ainsi honorer un engagement important et prioritaire du programme gouvernemental 2020-2024. Grâce à ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique, nous allons franchir une étape cruciale en matière d'environnement et de développement durable.

M. le président, le « *Environment Protection Act* » de 1991 a joué et continue de jouer un rôle déterminant dans la sauvegarde de nos atouts environnementaux depuis trois décennies. Ceci dit, depuis 1991, la problématique environnementale a évolué non seulement à Maurice mais aussi au niveau mondial. D'autres défis ayant une portée internationale se sont révélés et la problématique du changement climatique fait partie de cette catégorie.

Ce gouvernement n'a pas tardé à réagir avec promptitude et prévoyance pour parer à toute éventualité qui pourrait nous affecter de par l'incertitude et l'intensité des effets du changement climatique. Nous avons commencé la préparation de nos stratégies d'interventions et de réponse en promulguant plusieurs lois cadre relatives au changement climatique au cours de ces cinq dernières années. Le gouvernement est venu de l'avant avec notamment -

1. La « *National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act* » en 2016 ;
2. La « *Land Drainage Authority Act* » en 2017 ;

3. La « *Local Government (Amendment) Act* » en 2018, et
4. La « *Mauritius Meteorological Services Act* » en 2019.

Ces cadres législatifs ont, certes, permis de renforcer la gestion des différents impacts du changement climatique, mais, compte tenu de la complexité et de la nature multisectorielle de ce phénomène, une loi, plus spécifique et adaptée, s'est avérée nécessaire pour nous donner plus de moyens pour renforcer notre résilience face à ce grand défi.

Permettez-moi de rappeler à la Chambre, M. le président, que les impacts du changement climatique sont perceptibles de plusieurs manières; la première étant les événements climatiques extrêmes tels que les cyclones et les pluies diluviennes. Il y a également des changements à évolution lente tels que la hausse du niveau de la mer, l'érosion côtière, le blanchiment des coraux et l'intrusion de l'eau saline dans les nappes phréatiques, entre autres.

Les événements extrêmes aussi bien que les impacts à évolution lente peuvent avoir des conséquences considérables sur plusieurs secteurs socio-économiques. Ils mettent en péril nos moyens de subsistance, notre sécurité alimentaire, notre santé, nos infrastructures et l'écosystème, entre autres. Ils menacent ainsi la stabilité de plusieurs secteurs importants comme l'agriculture, l'eau, la pêche et le tourisme, entre autres.

Je voudrais, à ce titre, citer le Premier ministre qui avait déclaré dans une allocution précédente, je cite -

"Climate Change is dramatically altering the equation, putting at risk the very sustainability of our development", fin de citation.

M. le président, comme je l'avais souligné lors de mon discours pour le budget 2020-2021, nous avons tous été pris de court par l'émergence de la crise sanitaire de la COVID-19, et les problèmes, qui ont suivi, ont été au centre de nos préoccupations depuis le début de cette année. De ce fait, nous avons peut-être perdu de vue la pertinence des autres enjeux environnementaux tel que le changement climatique.

Comme l'avait souligné le Secrétaire Exécutif de l'Organe des Nations Unies en charge du Changement Climatique, madame Patricia Espinosa, je cite -

"COVID-19 is the most urgent threat facing humanity today, but we cannot forget that climate change is the biggest threat facing humanity over the long term", fin de citation.

Alors que nous étions en confinement, plusieurs régions de la planète ont continué à subir les impacts du changement climatique notamment à travers des phénomènes météorologiques extrêmes.

Permettez-moi de citer quelques-uns, à titre d'exemple, l'ouragan de catégorie-5 Harold avait dévasté les îles du Pacifique tels que les îles Fiji, les îles Salomon et le Vanuatu en avril dernier, et le cyclone Amphane avait durement touché le Bangladesh et l'Est de l'Inde en mai dernier. Donc, il est clair qu'il n'y a pas eu de répit en ce qui concerne le changement climatique. Au contraire, ces pays ont dû gérer les impacts combinés de la COVID-19 et des événements météorologiques extrêmes.

Malgré la baisse sensible des émissions de gaz à effet de serre à cause de la réduction des activités humaines à travers le monde durant le pic de la crise de COVID-19, cela ne suffira pas pour endiguer le réchauffement climatique qui est le résultat de plus de 150 années d'émission intense et continue des pays industrialisés principalement. D'ailleurs, les prévisions ont démontré que l'année 2020 pourrait être l'année la plus chaude jamais enregistrée.

M. le président, permettez-moi de citer quelques observations qui ont été faites au niveau mondial et qui reflètent la gravité de ce phénomène.

Les dernières observations scientifiques ont démontré que notre planète se dirige toujours vers une hausse de la température globale qui va atteindre les 3 degrés Celsius d'ici la fin de ce siècle. Le rapport '*United in Science 2020*', publié en septembre dernier par l'*Organisation météorologique mondiale*, a une fois de plus mis en évidence la tendance aggravante dans laquelle nous avançons.

Comme le souligne ce rapport, la probabilité de franchir le seuil de 1,5 degré Celsius fixé par l'Accord de Paris en 2015 augmente chaque année. D'ailleurs, on pourrait même atteindre les 1,5 degrés Celsius d'ici 2024.

Dans le même temps, la période 2015-2019 a été la plus chaude jamais observée et cette amplification du réchauffement planétaire entraînera par conséquent l'aggravation des phénomènes liés au changement climatique.

Les vagues de chaleur et les canicules vont s'accroître et faire 250% plus de victimes à l'horizon 2050, notamment dans les pays de l'hémisphère nord. Les feux de forêt ont détruit plus de 8,3 millions d'hectares de forêt globalement de janvier à octobre 2020. La fonte de la banquise arctique s'accélère au rythme de 13% chaque décennie.

M. le président, notre île n'est pas à l'abri non plus. Les données locales sont toutes aussi inquiétantes. A titre d'exemple -

- Les relevés de température montrent une tendance du réchauffement du climat d'environ 1,2 degré Celsius, en comparaison avec une augmentation moyenne de 1,1 degré Celsius sur l'échelle globale.
- D'autre part, une tendance à la baisse des précipitations annuelles de 8% a été observée depuis 1950, tandis que les épisodes de précipitations de forte intensité sur une courte durée deviennent de plus en plus fréquents.
- Par ailleurs, l'élévation du niveau de la mer, au cours de la dernière décennie est de l'ordre de 5,6 mm par an et dépasse la moyenne mondiale qui est de l'ordre de 3,3 mm par an. Cette élévation accélérée du niveau de la mer provoque de graves dégradations de nos côtes et l'intrusion d'eau salée dans nos nappes phréatiques. Ainsi au cours de la dernière décennie, nous avons observé une perte de nos plages de près de 20 mètres en moyenne dans certaines régions.

Selon l'édition du *World Risk Report* publié en 2018, Maurice était classé au 10^{ème} rang des pays les plus exposés aux aléas naturels et à la 16^{ème} place des pays les plus à risques face aux catastrophes naturelles. Par contre dans son édition de cette année, le *World Risk Report* a amélioré le classement de Maurice qui est désormais à la 53^{ème} position parmi les pays les plus à risques contre des aléas naturels. Mais, Maurice reste un des pays les plus exposés au monde en raison de notre positionnement géographique qui est dans une zone cyclonique très active.

Les membres de la Chambre se souviendront des inondations de mars 2013 qui avaient causé des pertes de vies humaines. De plus, les dommages matériels avaient été estimés à plus de 25 millions de dollars. Depuis, des épisodes récurrents d'inondations ont été observés chaque année avec des dommages considérables aux infrastructures.

Si les observations sont déjà effrayantes, les projections sont encore plus inquiétantes, M. le président. Si les précipitations locales continuent à décroître, Maurice pourrait devenir un pays en manque d'eau d'ici 2025. Cela causera une baisse dans la production agricole estimée à 30% d'ici 2050. En ce qui concerne la montée du niveau des océans, elle s'accroîtra et pourrait atteindre 1 mètre d'ici la fin de ce siècle.

D'autant plus, selon une étude entreprise par la '*National Academy of Sciences*' des Etats Unies publiée cette année, la probabilité d'avoir des cyclones majeurs dans le sud de l'Océan Indien va s'accroître de 18% chaque décennie.

Par ailleurs, selon une étude menée sous le projet RAFI (*South West Ocean Indian Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative*) en 2016, sur le risque d'inondation à Maurice, je cite:

Mauritius will each year experience around USD 22 million in direct losses from flooding and that 60% of the direct losses from flooding would be from the residential sector", fin de citation.

M. le président, le changement climatique est une problématique globale qui nécessite des actions globales. Historiquement, ce sont les pays industrialisés qui sont responsables de l'accélération des émissions de gaz à effet de serre depuis les derniers 150 ans, notamment depuis la révolution industrielle. Par conséquent, ils sont responsables des conséquences que nous observons actuellement. Mais l'ironie est que ce sont les pays en voie de développement comme les Petits États Insulaires et les pays Africains qui sont en première ligne des impacts du changement climatique aujourd'hui.

Ainsi la solution réside concrètement dans l'action et l'engagement des pays industrialisés. Mais cependant au nom de la solidarité pour combattre ce phénomène global et suite à plusieurs années de négociation au sein de la *Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur le changement climatique*, il a été convenu, au plus haut niveau, que tous les pays membres de la Convention, incluant les pays en voie de développement, devront également contribuer à la réduction de leurs émissions de gaz à effet de serre afin de ralentir la progression du réchauffement de la planète.

C'est dans cette optique que l'Accord de Paris a pu être adopté en 2015 par tous les États membres de la Convention. Cet accord a été un tournant majeur et historique dans le processus des négociations sur le climat. Ainsi, depuis 2015 les négociations se sont focalisées sur la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris.

M. le président, je voudrais ici souligner que Maurice a été parmi les premiers pays à soumettre ses engagements de réduction de nos émissions de gaz à effet de serre à travers nos *Contributions Déterminées au niveau Nationale* aussi connu comme le « *NDC* », et ce dès Septembre 2015, avant le sommet de Paris. Par la suite, Maurice a ratifié l'Accord de Paris dès Avril 2016 et nous étions parmi les premiers à le faire.

Maurice a d'ailleurs pris l'engagement en 2015 de réduire ses émissions de 30% d'ici 2030 par rapport au scénario '*business as usual*', mais à condition d'avoir une assistance financière et technique de la communauté internationale, dans ce sens. Ceci car l'implémentation de nos objectifs en matière d'adaptation et d'atténuation de nos émissions avait été estimée à 5.5 milliards de dollars, dont 4 milliards que pour l'adaptation.

M. le président, cette année aurait dû être une étape importante dans le calendrier de l'Accord de Paris, car nous entrons dans la phase de son implémentation effective. Les Etats membres de la Convention doivent revoir à la hausse leurs objectifs de réduction d'émission de gaz à effet de serre à travers leurs *Contributions déterminées au niveau national*. La COP26 aurait dû être le point de départ de cette nouvelle phase. Mais cette échéance a été renvoyée à l'année prochaine à cause de la pandémie de COVID-19.

Pour nous donner les moyens d'atteindre les objectifs de l'implémentation de l'Accord de Paris, il est essentiel que nous puissions mettre en place les cadres législatifs et institutionnels nécessaires et aussi revoir ceux existants, afin de nous conformer aux décisions et aux obligations de l'Accord de Paris et d'autres mécanismes similaires.

M. le président, permettez-moi maintenant de m'étendre un instant sur certaines obligations importantes liées à la *Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques* et de l'Accord de Paris, pertinent pour Maurice.

La première concerne les obligations de compte rendu et les communications nationales.

Conformément à l'article 4, paragraphe 1 (a), et à l'article 12 de la Convention, chaque pays membre doit périodiquement préparer et transmettre une communication nationale au secrétariat de la Convention. La communication nationale est un moyen essentiel d'échanger des informations sur la manière dont chaque pays est en train de mettre en œuvre les décisions de la Convention. Elle permet également de mettre en évidence les contraintes pour atteindre les objectifs fixés.

Je tiens à informer les membres de cette Assemblée que les processus d'inventaire des gaz à effet de serre sont des éléments fondamentaux du mécanisme de transparence qui ouvrira la voie à la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris. Des inventaires permettent de comprendre la tendance des émissions mondiales et d'évaluer les efforts pour la réduction des émissions des gaz à effet de serre afin d'atteindre les objectifs de l'Accord de Paris.

La deuxième porte sur l'évaluation de la vulnérabilité et l'adaptation au changement climatique.

Afin de renforcer leur résilience aux effets néfastes du changement climatique, les pays membres de la Convention sont également tenus de prendre des mesures pour évaluer leur vulnérabilité et leur capacité d'adaptation, conformément à l'article 7 de l'Accord de Paris ainsi qu'à l'article 4 de la Convention. Ces articles se réfèrent à la mise en œuvre de mesures nationales ainsi qu'à l'élaboration des plans intégrés d'adaptation au changement climatique.

Chaque pays membre est aussi tenu de soumettre périodiquement une communication sur l'adaptation, qui peut inclure ses priorités, ses besoins et le soutien nécessaire pour la mise en œuvre des mesures qui ont été préconisées, conformément à l'article 7 de l'Accord de Paris.

La troisième porte sur l'éducation, la formation et la sensibilisation du grand public.

Conformément à l'article 6 de la Convention, les pays membres sont invités à entreprendre la sensibilisation du grand public au changement climatique et aussi à promouvoir l'éducation et la formation autour de cette problématique.

La quatrième concerne les mesures d'atténuation dans le cadre de l'Accord de Paris.

En ce qui concerne les mesures d'atténuation conformément à l'article 4 de l'Accord de Paris, tous les pays se sont engagés, par le biais de leurs *Contributions déterminées au niveau national*, à réduire leurs émissions de gaz à effet de serre.

La transition écologique vers un développement à faibles émissions à travers l'utilisation accrue des énergies renouvelables nécessitera des investissements conséquents pour les pays en développement. Nous aurons besoin de l'assistance des pays développés en termes de financement, de développement des capacités et du transfert des technologies, notamment.

La cinquième concerne les moyens financiers.

Selon l'article 4.7 de la Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques, la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris par les pays en développement dépendra des soutiens financiers et techniques qui seront apportés par les pays développés. Les pays

développés ont d'ailleurs pris l'engagement de mobiliser 100 milliards *USD* par an pour soutenir les pays en voie de développement.

Les pays industrialisés devraient également honorer les promesses faites pour soutenir les pays en développement en termes de transfert de technologie et de renforcement des capacités. Leurs objectifs d'atténuation doivent aussi être revus à la hausse pour que les objectifs de l'Accord de Paris soient atteints.

M. le président, dans ce contexte, pour pouvoir accéder aux *finances climat*, notre système institutionnel et législatif doit être amélioré pour que nous puissions atteindre nos objectifs.

M. le président, selon le '*Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change*' du Royaume-Uni, nous pouvons dénombrer plus de 2,000 lois et politiques sur le changement climatique dans le monde à ce jour.

Ainsi, au cours de la préparation de cette loi, nous nous sommes inspirés des dispositions légales de plusieurs pays notamment les pays développés, les pays en voie de développement et les petits Etats insulaires en développement. A titre d'exemple –

- Le Royaume-Uni qui avait inclus des objectifs d'émission de gaz à effet de serre à l'horizon 2050;
- La Nouvelle-Zélande qui possède un mécanisme bien défini pour les inventaires des émissions de gaz à effet de serre;
- Le Kenya qui avait inclus la mise en place d'un conseil sur le changement climatique et défini clairement les responsabilités et les actions des secteurs public et privé;
- L'Inde qui a mis en place un Conseil nationale sur le changement climatique, et
- Le Vanuatu qui dispose d'un département pour le changement climatique.

Des dispositions spécifiques dans ces législations se sont révélées pertinentes dans notre contexte.

Comme je l'avais mentionné précédemment, nous avons déjà promulgué plusieurs lois depuis 2016 concernant la réduction et la gestion des risques de catastrophe et la gestion des drains, entre autres. Mais cependant, ces cadres légaux ne sont pas suffisants pour nous

conformer aux dispositions de l'Accord de Paris. Une législation spécifique sur le changement climatique est nécessaire. C'est dans cette perspective que nous proposons aujourd'hui ce projet de loi.

Pendant le processus de préparation de ce projet de loi, nous avons également eu une série de consultations avec toutes les parties prenantes et la société civile, notamment à travers le comité du '*Nationale Network on Sustainable Development*' qui s'est réuni en février dernier et pendant '*Les Assises de l'Environnement*' qui avait eu lieu en décembre 2019, où la thématique du Changement Climatique avait été un des sujets principaux de nos discussions.

M. le président, je voudrais souligner que l'objectif principal de ce projet de loi est de gérer les impacts du changement climatique et de permettre la transition vers une économie à basse émission de carbone, en ligne avec les obligations de la *Convention cadre des Nations unies sur le Changement climatique, le Protocole de Kyoto et l'Accord de Paris*.

Je tiens ici à souligner qu'il y a eu quelques commentaires à l'effet que, comme la deuxième période d'engagement du Protocole de Kyoto arrive à échéance cette année, il serait ainsi de rigueur de ne pas faire mention du Protocole de Kyoto dans ce projet de loi.

M. le président, je tiens à préciser que sous le Protocole de Kyoto plusieurs mécanismes ont été mis sur pied, notamment '*l'Adaptation Fund*' qui vise à soutenir les projets d'adaptation dans les pays en voie de développement et le '*Clean Development Mechanism*' qui régit les échanges des droits d'émissions ou les crédits carbone entre les pays développés et ceux en voie de développement.

Ces deux mécanismes seront toujours en vigueur et fonctionnels même au-delà de cette année. D'où l'inclusion du Protocole de Kyoto dans ce projet de loi.

D'ailleurs plusieurs projets, en cours à Maurice, ont bénéficié de financement sous le '*Adaptation Fund*' et sous le '*Clean Development Mechanism*'.

M. le président, ce projet de loi vise également à établir un cadre légal pour –

1. mieux préparer les générations présentes et futures à faire face à l'aggravation des conditions climatiques;
2. apporter un cadre législatif efficace pour renforcer la vulnérabilité de Maurice face aux conditions climatiques extrêmes afin de protéger nos concitoyens et pour préserver les atouts naturels qui sont indispensables pour notre économie;

3. permettre à Maurice de satisfaire les obligations de la Convention cadre des nations Unies sur le changement climatique;
4. mettre en place un mécanisme adéquat pour les obligations de compte rendu et les communications nationales concernant les mesures d'atténuation et d'adaptation aux changements climatiques pour les secteurs public et privé;
5. renforcer notre cadre institutionnel afin de permettre la mise en application des dispositions de ce projet de loi;
6. promouvoir l'approche de '*Nature-Based Solutions*' qui vise à promouvoir la nature comme solution durable à la problématique climatique, à travers la protection, la restauration et la gestion durable des écosystèmes tels que les zones écologiquement sensibles qui comprennent les zones humides, les terres marécageuses et les réserves fluviales et la zone côtière, entre autres, et
7. inculquer une culture où le changement climatique sera au centre de nos planifications à long terme en tant que thématique transversale et multisectorielle et qui requiert la collaboration de tous les partenaires socio-économiques du public, du privé, du monde associatif et de la société civile.

M. le président, je vais maintenant lister quelques-unes des principales dispositions de ce projet de loi. Il prévoit notamment de -

- 1) mettre en place un Conseil interministériel sur le changement climatique où le ministre qui aura la responsabilité du changement climatique, élabore des politiques en matière de changement climatique, fixe les priorités en matière d'adaptation et d'atténuation, et fasse le suivi des progrès réalisés par les ministères sur les projets sur les changements climatiques;
- 2) mettre sur pied un département du changement climatique, tel comme préconisé dans le *Climate Change Bill*. Ce département doit, entre autres, élaborer des politiques, des programmes et des plans d'action relatifs au changement climatique et coordonner la recherche y relative;
- 3) mettre en place un comité sur le changement climatique qui coordonnera la préparation notamment les rapports y relatifs, la mise en œuvre des activités liées aux inventaires des émissions de gaz à effet de serre et les évaluations de la vulnérabilité et à l'adaptation au changement climatique;

- 4) réaliser des inventaires annuels des émissions de gaz à effet de serre;
- 5) faire le suivi et mettre en œuvre des mesures sectorielles d'adaptation et d'atténuation;
- 6) assurer la conformité aux normes fiduciaires établies par des institutions tels que *l'Adaptation Fund Board*, le *Green Climate Fund* et d'autres fonds internationaux liés au financement climat et agir en tant qu'entité nationale de la mise en œuvre en vue de rechercher un accès direct au changement climatique.

M. le président, comme mentionné précédemment, ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique prévoit la création de trois entités administratives notamment -

- a) un comité interministériel à la section (4);
- b) un département du changement climatique à la section (8) , et
- c) un comité sur le changement climatique à la section (11).

Premièrement, le comité interministériel sera présidé par le Premier ministre et aura comme responsabilité:

- a) d'élaborer des politiques sur le changement climatique et établir des priorités pour l'adaptation et l'atténuation du changement climatique dans tous les secteurs pertinents;
- b) d'examiner les progrès réalisés par les ministères sur tous les projets relatifs au changement climatique;
- c) d'assurer la coordination et la coopération entre les services gouvernementaux, les autorités locales et les autres organisations engagées dans les programmes sur le changement climatique, et
- d) de faire les recommandations et émettre les directives qu'il juge nécessaires aux ministères concernés.

M. le président, pour garantir que les objectifs de ce projet de loi soient atteints, des dispositions ont été prises à la section (7) pour permettre au ministre qui a la responsabilité du changement climatique -

- a) d'élaborer des politiques en matière de changement climatique et formuler des recommandations au conseil;

- b) de coordonner tous les programmes sur le changement climatique et émettre des directives aux services gouvernementaux et aux autorités locales pour la mise en œuvre des politiques et programmes sur le changement climatique;
- c) de promouvoir et encourager les initiatives de technologies propres qui peuvent contribuer aux efforts d'adaptation et d'atténuation, et
- d) de nommer les comités consultatifs techniques, les comités pour les inventaires des émissions et tout autre comité qui sera utile.

Nous aurons deuxièmement, le département du changement climatique. Ce département devra remplir un certain nombre de fonctions qui sont énoncées à l'article (8) de ce projet de loi. Elles sont, entre autres:

- a) de promouvoir des mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation pour lutter contre le changement climatique dans les secteurs concernés;
- b) d'élaborer et coordonner les politiques, les projets, les stratégies, les programmes et les plans d'action pour lutter contre le changement climatique et superviser leur mise en œuvre par les parties prenantes concernées, y compris les ministères et les entités publiques et privés;
- c) de formuler et mettre à jour des lignes directrices pour les évaluations de la vulnérabilité et des risques liés au changement climatique;
- d) d'établir des procédures pour réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre;
- e) d'établir des mécanismes pour les institutions publiques et privées, pour la préparation des rapports climat;
- f) d'établir et maintenir un système de base de données sur les changements climatiques pour permettre le suivi et la vérification des mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation;
- g) de compiler et rendre accessibles des informations sur les changements climatiques;
- h) de fournir un soutien technique et de coordonner la recherche et les études par les institutions publiques et privées, en ce qui concerne les mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation;

- i) de mobiliser les ressources techniques et financières nécessaires pour la formulation et la mise en œuvre de projets;
- j) de promouvoir et renforcer la participation des parties prenantes, y compris le monde des affaires, les organisations non gouvernementales et les communautés locales; et
- k) de commander des études sur le changement climatique, en tenant compte, entre autres, des droits de l'homme, du patrimoine culturel et la question du genre.

Par ailleurs, le département du changement climatique devra également formuler -

- a) conformément à l'article (13) de ce projet de loi, une stratégie et plan d'action nationale d'adaptation au changement climatique fondée sur les vulnérabilités et les risques climatiques, les besoins et mesures d'adaptation spécifiques pour des secteurs tels que l'eau, l'agriculture, le tourisme, la pêche, les infrastructures, les zones côtières, la biodiversité et la sante publique. cette stratégie doit être revue tous les 5 ans.
- b) conformément à l'article (14) de ce projet de loi, une stratégie et plan d'action nationale d'atténuation du changement climatique et les contributions déterminées au niveau national conformément aux priorités nationales de développement et visant à réaliser une transition vers une économie à faibles émissions de carbone. les secteurs tels que l'énergie, le transport, les industries, l'agriculture et la gestion des déchets seront impliqués. la stratégie ici aussi devra être revue tous les 5 ans.
- c) conformément à l'article (15) de ce projet de loi, un inventaire national des émissions de gaz à effet de serre sera entrepris chaque année et des communications nationales seront préparées tous les 4 ans.

Le ministère aura besoin de connaissances et de compétences techniques, notamment pour -

- a) la modélisation afin de permettre les prévisions de paramètres climatiques et les impacts probables sur les secteurs sensibles et vulnérables. ceci, en vue d'aider à la formulation de politiques d'adaptation appropriées et à la mise en œuvre de mesures de réduction des risques;

- b) Le calcul des émissions et la préparation des inventaires des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, ainsi que l'évaluation de l'empreinte carbone des grands projets;
- c) L'évaluation de la vulnérabilité et les impacts dans les secteurs sensibles et vulnérables pour permettre à Maurice de prendre les mesures d'adaptation appropriées;
- d) L'identification, l'évaluation et la promotion des technologies appropriées d'adaptation et d'atténuation ;
- e) La mise en place de système de conception, de préparation et la mise en œuvre d'un mécanisme transparent de suivi et de vérification pour faciliter la mobilisation des ressources financières ; et
- f) La réalisation d'analyses coûts-bénéfices pour les mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation.

Troisièmement, comme l'indique l'article (11) de ce projet de loi, un comité sur le changement climatique sera créé. La principale fonction de ce comité sera de -

- a) Coordonner la préparation du rapport d'inventaire national, des communications nationales et des autres rapports qui pourraient être exigés sous la Convention cadre et d'autres conventions internationales;
- b) Coordonner la mise en œuvre des mesures liées aux inventaires de gaz à effet de serre, à la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, aux évaluations des risques associés ainsi que la vulnérabilité et l'adaptation au changement climatique;
- c) Coordonner la planification stratégique et la coordination des politiques nationales;
- d) Recommander des approches pour la surveillance des émissions dans les secteurs tels que l'agriculture, l'aviation, l'énergie, l'industrie, l'utilisation des terres, la gestion des forêts, le transport et la gestion des déchets ainsi que tout autre secteur pertinent;
- e) Recommander des approches pour l'évaluation de la vulnérabilité et les besoins d'adaptation dans les secteurs de l'agriculture, de la biodiversité, des

zones côtières, de la pêche, des infrastructures, et des ressources marines entre autres ;

- f) Recommander des approches pour surveiller les effets néfastes du changement climatique sur les droits de l'homme, les communautés vulnérables et les moyens d'existence ; et
- g) Coordonner toutes les autres activités liées au changement climatique.

M. le président, le département du changement climatique et le comité sur le changement climatique auront des rôles et des responsabilités spécifiques et bien distinctes.

La mise en place d'un département dédié au changement climatique sera essentielle pour pouvoir mettre en œuvre efficacement et pleinement les dispositions de ce projet de loi.

Dans le même sens, un comité dédié au changement climatique assurera une coordination appropriée et le suivi des dispositions qui sont préconisées dans ce projet de loi.

Par ailleurs, l'article (16) de ce projet de loi prévoit également les responsabilités des institutions publiques et privées, notamment pour -

- a) réaliser des évaluations de la vulnérabilité et des risques et mettre en œuvre des mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation ;
- b) Intégrer le changement climatique dans les stratégies sectorielles et les plans d'actions ;
- c) mettre en œuvre les mesures pertinentes spécifiées dans la stratégie et le plan d'action nationale d'adaptation et dans la stratégie et le plan d'action nationale d'atténuation au changement climatique ;
- d) rapporter les émissions sectorielles de gaz à effet de serre pour un inventaire national ; et
- e) examiner, à des intervalles réguliers la mise en œuvre des mesures d'adaptation et d'atténuation.

M. le président, le changement climatique est une question transversale qui nécessite la collaboration de tous les Ministères, de tous les secteurs et tous les composants de la société.

Comme vous le savez, l'inclusion est au centre du programme '*2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*' qui contient un volet changement climatique à travers l'objectif 13 des '*Objectifs de développement durable*'.

C'est dans cette optique que la section 19 de ce projet de loi va promouvoir une approche inclusive et consultative lors de l'élaboration de stratégies et politiques climat pour les entités publiques.

Cette disposition va inclure tous les différents composants de la société civile, y compris les femmes, les jeunes, les étudiants, les seniors, les enseignants, les agriculteurs, les pêcheurs, les universitaires, le monde des affaires, le secteur privé, les ONGs, le monde associatif et la société civile.

Afin de faciliter ce processus participatif, ce projet de loi a introduit un amendement visant à élargir les fonctions de la «*National Network for Sustainable Development*» sous la «*Environment Protection Act*». A ce titre, le projet de loi a prévu la mise en place d'une plate-forme de haut niveau que je présiderai et qui réunira le secteur privé et les ONG, entre autres. Grâce à ce forum, le public pourra également contribuer au processus décisionnel lié au changement climatique. Le public pourra faire des propositions sur les politiques visant à promouvoir le développement durable et la transition vers une économie à faibles émissions de carbone.

M. le président, ce projet de loi prévoit également un volet sur Rodrigues, notamment -

- (a) le Commissaire à l'environnement de Rodrigues sera responsable de la formulation des stratégies relatives au changement climatique et veillera à ce que les mesures relatives au changement climatique soient effectivement et efficacement mises en œuvre et maintenues à Rodrigues; et
- (b) il y aura un Comité du changement climatique de Rodrigues qui, entre autres, collaborera avec le Comité du changement climatique pour la préparation des rapports y relatifs.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi ajouter que le ministère qui aura la charge du changement climatique agira en tant qu'entité nationale de la mise en œuvre pour accéder au financement climat international pour les projets liés au changement climatique et doit ainsi se conformer aux normes fiduciaires et autres exigences fixées par l'*Adaptation Fund Board*, le *Green Climate Fund* et d'autres fonds climat.

Un autre élément important de ce cadre légal est qu'il sera '*Gender Responsive*' car il inclura la question de l'égalité des genres et l'autonomisation des femmes comme un sujet transversale. La contribution de la femme est primordiale en tant que parties prenantes et agents du changement dans la société pour solutionner la problématique du changement climatique.

La femme contribue grandement au bien-être et au développement durable de nos collectivités et de notre pays, ainsi qu'au maintien des écosystèmes, de la biodiversité et des ressources naturelles, à travers notamment leurs contributions dans la promotion de la consommation durable et responsable dans la cellule familiale.

Ceci est en adéquation avec l'Accord de Paris qui encourage les pays membres à promouvoir les droits de la personne, l'égalité des genres et l'autonomisation des femmes. La 25^{ème} Conférence des Parties de la Convention cadre des Nations Unies sur le Changement Climatique a aussi pris des mesures pour accélérer une approche plus sensible à la question de l'égalité des genres en adoptant le '*Lima Work Programme on Gender and Gender Action Plan*' qui favorise la participation des femmes dans le processus climatique.

C'est dans cette optique que ce projet de loi prévoit que des études qui seront entreprises sur le changement climatique tiendront compte de la question de l'égalité des genres et l'autonomisation des femmes.

M. le président, conformément à l'article 6 de la Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques, l'éducation, la formation et la sensibilisation du public sont essentielles pour le renforcement des capacités des citoyens afin qu'ils puissent contribuer et s'engager pour relever le défi climatique. La clé pour la transition vers une société plus verte et plus résiliente passe par une prise de conscience citoyenne. A cet égard, ce projet de loi a fait provision à la section 8 pour la promotion de l'éducation, la formation et la sensibilisation au changement climatique.

Cela rejoint la vision annoncée du gouvernement pour privilégier la sensibilisation à tous les niveaux pour toucher tous les composants de la société mauricienne notamment les jeunes, les femmes, les *seniors*, les agriculteurs, les éducateurs, entre autres. Les campagnes de sensibilisation sur l'environnement et le changement climatique sont en cours à travers l'île et, à titre d'exemple, la mise sur pied d'un '*National Youth Environment Council*' sous l'égide du *Bureau du Premier Ministre* vise à promouvoir l'engagement et le dialogue avec les jeunes.

Dans le même sens, le développement des capacités est une de nos priorités. Tous les projets qui sont menés par mon ministère contiennent un composant concernant le développement des capacités pour permettre aux parties prenantes et aux institutions concernées d'acquérir des compétences nécessaires afin de contribuer plus efficacement pour combattre le changement climatique. Dans ce contexte, je peux vous annoncer qu'une enveloppe d'aide a été obtenue de l'Union Européenne pour entreprendre une étude d'évaluation des besoins pour la mise en place des provisions de ce projet de loi.

M. le président, cette loi sur le changement climatique va permettre une approche holistique et durable pour la planification et l'aménagement du territoire. Elle va promouvoir une meilleure synergie entre les autorités concernées, ainsi qu'une approche '*nature-based solutions*' qui est basée sur la gestion durable de nos écosystèmes naturels et de leur restauration.

M. le président, permettez-moi de rappeler que le budget 2020-2021 prévoit la mise en place d'une '*Mauritius Resilience Strategy*' qui justement s'appuie sur un paradigme axé sur l'approche '*nature-based solutions*'.

À cet égard, des fonds ont été mobilisés par le gouvernement et par les bailleurs de fond, pour générer des nouvelles cartographies pour les *Environmentally Sensitive Areas* plus connu comme *ESAs* et pour leurs intégrations dans l'*Outline Planning Scheme* et dans le processus de l'attribution des *Building and Land Use Permits*.

Ces zones écologiquement sensibles sont très importantes pour atténuer les impacts du changement climatique tels que l'érosion côtière, grâce aux mangliers et aux crues soudaines, grâce aux *wetlands*, qui servent à absorber le surplus d'eau pluviale lors des fortes averses.

Cette approche apportera des multiples avantages à l'environnement et aux communautés locales.

En ce qui concerne le lien avec d'autres lois existantes, ce projet de loi prévoit que des amendements soient apportées au *Beach Authority Act*; *Environment Protection Act*; *Local Government Act*; *Pas Géométriques Act*; *State Lands Act*; *Planning and Development Act* et au *Tourism Authority Act*, afin que le changement climatique soit pris en compte dans la planification stratégique et sectorielle.

M. le président, je voudrais réitérer le fait que ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique apportera les avantages suivants –

- a) La promulgation d'un cadre légal sur le changement climatique donnera un signal fort pour démontrer l'engagement du gouvernement sur une problématique aussi pertinente. Cette loi permettra à Maurice de devenir un modèle pour les Petits États Insulaires en Développement en termes de leadership et de savoir-faire concernant le problème du changement climatique;
- b) Il permettra d'adopter une politique de développement plus résilient et une approche nouvelle dans le réaménagement du territoire et en vue de se préparer aux aléas climatiques extrêmes;
- c) Il permettra à Maurice d'être mieux préparé pour accéder à des fonds pour des projets d'adaptation et d'atténuation qui sont généralement des projets à fort capital. Ce nouveau cadre juridique et institutionnel améliorera également la visibilité de Maurice dans les plateformes internationales où les bailleurs de fonds sont très présents;
- d) Finalement, ce projet de loi aidera à promouvoir l'image de Maurice en termes de destination touristique durable où les enjeux écologiques sont prioritaires.

M. le président, ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique pourra aussi créer des synergies avec d'autres problématiques majeures liées au climat, notamment la biodiversité, la dégradation des terres ainsi que la protection de la couche d'ozone.

Ainsi, cette loi profitera à d'autres institutions publiques et privées. De plus, en vertu des accords internationaux multilatéraux sur l'environnement liés au changement climatique, notamment la Convention sur la diversité biologique, la Convention des Nations Unies sur le droit de la mer, la Convention de Nairobi, la Convention des Nations Unies sur la désertification et la dégradation des terres ainsi que le Protocole de Montréal, davantage de ressources pourront être mobilisés par Maurice pour renforcer les capacités et les initiatives à plusieurs niveaux dans d'autres secteurs importants.

M. le président, ce gouvernement est déterminé à nous donner les moyens pour lutter contre le changement climatique. En tant que gouvernement responsable, nous sommes pleinement conscients de l'urgence de la situation et de la vulnérabilité de Maurice face à ce phénomène.

Malgré nos ressources limitées en tant que Petit État Insulaire, nous voulons être à la hauteur de la situation. Il est grand temps de disposer d'une législation adéquate. Il est urgent de faire les choses de manière coordonnée et organisée pour rendre Maurice plus résilient au

changement climatique et permettre une transition vers un développement sobre en carbone, conformément à nos objectifs de promouvoir une économie verte et durable.

M. le président, ce projet de loi était longuement attendu. Ce gouvernement avait pris l'engagement audacieux de venir de l'avant avec ce projet de loi et nous y voilà.

Gouverner c'est prévoir. Ce projet de loi va permettre d'instaurer une culture d'anticipation dans les processus décisionnels et de développements par rapport aux impacts du changement climatique. Il va aussi permettre une gestion du changement climatique plus structurée et holistique.

Il permettra d'apporter un changement dans nos habitudes et de nos comportements afin d'atteindre nos objectifs de transition vers une économie résiliente et verte. Cela se fera avec la collaboration de tout un chacun, M. le président.

M. le président, suite aux derniers échanges que mon ministère a eu avec les parties prenantes, permettez-moi de proposer que des amendements mineurs suivants soient apportés à ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique lorsque nous atteindrons le *Committee Stage* –

- 1) Notamment à la section 2 sur la clause *Interpretation*, pour l'inclusion de la définition du *Doha Amendments*, et la modification de la définition de *Greenhouse gas* pour inclure la définition qui est stipulée sous le *Protocole de Kyoto* et les *Amendements de Doha*;
- 2) A l'article 30(2) (b)(ii) (2)(a) notamment sur les fonctions de la *National Network for Sustainable Development* sous la section 11 de la *Environment Protection Act* pour inclure le *Climate Change Act*.
- 3) A supprimer les articles (5)(d)(i) and (5)(d)(ii) de la section 30 du *Planning and Development Act*, car selon le ministère *of Housing and Lands*, ces provisions n'ont pas été proclamées et donc ne sont pas applicables. D'un autre côté, ces provisions ont été déjà incluses dans la section 117 (3) de la *Local Government Act* de 2011 qui a pris toutes les fonctions d'autorisation relatives à l'aménagement du territoire et répond aux exigences d'élaboration des lignes directrices pour la délivrance de permis de construction et d'utilisation du sol. Cela serait conforme au projet de loi sur le changement climatique, M. le président, et

- 4) Sous la *First Schedule* pour inclure *Minister responsible for the subject of land transport*.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant inviter tous les membres de la Chambre à apporter leur soutien à ce projet de loi qui, je l'espère, fera l'unanimité.

M. le président, c'est avec une grande satisfaction que je recommande ce projet de loi à la Chambre.

Je vous remercie.

Mr Seeruttun seconded.

(6.32 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has been rather lengthy, but when we make a thorough analysis of the specific clauses, it stands to reason, irrespective of what he has said, that he is not faithful to the objective said, and I will explain as I go along.

To a large extent, this Bill is a copycat of the Environment Protection Act of 2002, but before I make an in-depth analysis of specific provisions or clauses of the Bill, let me say a few words on the National Environment Emergency. We are still in a state of National Environment Emergency and if we have been able to mitigate the impact of the oil spill from the Wakashio, I have to praise our unsung heroes from the NGOs and the thousands of volunteers who were selfless in their endeavours and commitment to face the crisis. I also place on record the contribution of the Press and Mr N. Degnarain from Forbes Magazine who has contributed significantly to clarify a number of nebulous zones concerning the MV Wakashio.

This Bill is being introduced against this backdrop, and I hope the Prime Minister, the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and the mover of the Bill will muster courage to depone before the Court of Investigation. The terms of reference should have been wider and should have encompassed the ecological disaster. There should be no doubt about it. In fact, I made this clear in a letter which I addressed to the Secretary of the Court of Investigation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after the disastrous mishandling of the Wakashio crisis which has brought about the worst ecological disaster which this country has known, the Minister of Environment, Climate change and Solid Waste Management is doing no better today when

we see the undue haste with which this Climate Change Bill is being rushed through this House, imposing First, Second and Third Reading in the National Assembly on the same day. But time will tell whether things will be different. Now, we would have thought that he would have become wiser after what recently happened. And I expect that in the light of what has been said and my conclusion as from what I have seen is that *'la montagne va accoucher d'une souris'*, and the Bill, as I have stated earlier, is an unnecessary if not reckless duplication of the Environment Protection Act.

And I will show at a later stage and compare certain provisions of the specific Bill, and then the House can have the pleasure to assess what I have just said and make a comparative study with the Environment Protection Act, which is almost a cut and paste, and this is what appears in certain clauses of the Climate Change Bill.

Now, let me explain why the Minister is failing our country when he is rushing such an important piece of legislation through this House in an attempt to have it passed in one. We all know that climate change is one of the most important challenges, if not the most important challenge, which the world and indeed our country have to face. In any country respective of the vulnerability of the Small Island Developing States, coastal or inland, where the protection of the environment is taken seriously, it would have been expected that prior to such a Bill being brought before the National Assembly, there would have been wide discussion at the bar of public opinion, inviting people to make substantive comments, reliable comments. And let me remind the Minister of a communiqué which appeared in the media, written by *'Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz'*, and I am sure the Minister had a good reading and I am sure he has been able to draw conclusion in the light of the findings of this article and comments and recommendations made.

Now, the Minister earlier mentioned the Electoral Manifesto - the climate change which was allegedly part; I think it was part of the 2014 Electoral Manifesto of the MSM Government. And for five years, they did nothing. The proof of the pudding, as we say, is in the eating. Their incompetence was revealed when, at the end of their mandate, no Climate Change Bill had been brought before this House. December 2014 to November 2019, no Climate Change Bill, although the Bill ranked high in their Electoral Manifesto and in their Government Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this reminds me of another notorious statement which, to many of us, is a con; another con like the notorious *'dilo 24 lor 7'*. Now, I understand why the Minister is

unwilling to give a legally binding commitment on carbon neutral or net zero emission. Government had stated that it is going to embark on the construction of low-income housing units. I would like to ask the Minister where the prototype housing unit with built panel for low carbon is. Climate targets have to be defined; there is no independent scrutiny to assess welfare and environmental standards of food import, despite we are signatory to many trade deals.

To a large extent, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill is the same old wine in a new bottle, with a new label. And after five years of procrastination under their previous mandate, now Government came up with a new Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management. But it is only the name which is new. Otherwise, everything else remains identical; same staff, same Heads, same Division, same technicians, same committees. Yet, another year has nearly elapsed, 07 November 2019 to 03 November 2020, and this is where the hon. Minister brings a disservice to the country. He brings a Bill before this House, which I understand had already been prepared before his appointment as Minister. I will ask you, Minister, to tell the House exactly what is the difference in this Bill from the one which pre-existed your appointment, because I suspect that you have brought before this House a Bill which is substantially similar, if not identical to the one which existed before your appointment as a Minister. In other words, apart from the Government's undue delay for five years, what have you done regarding this Bill for a whole year?

The Minister mentioned of interactive session with the public, but, in fact, the story is different when you talk to NGO. And after six years of undue delay, during which this Government has been paying lip service to the challenges of climate change but failing to show its seriousness of purpose by failing to come up with a Climate Change Bill, why rushing this Bill now through Parliament, as I stated earlier, with First, Second, Third Reading scheduled on the same day? The Minister has to state very clearly who did he have discussion with, and if he did, it was for a short spell. Because, as I say, there has been no in-depth discussions with environmental NGO. There has been no workshop with all stakeholders, no expert seminars with open participation. In other words, there has been no participative democracy after elaboration of this Bill. And I put the question: after six years of delay, surely, I would have expected the Minister, as a responsible Minister, to disseminate the relevant information, circulate the Bill, invite comments and make sure that there is wide discussion at the bar of public opinion.

Earlier, I mentioned '*Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz*'. Apart from a culpable delay, the hon. Minister is also guilty of culpable omission, and it is interesting to note, in this context, what '*Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz*' has addressed in the communiqué which I mentioned. And do you know what was said, Mr Speaker, Sir? Dom you know what is the first sentence of the article which was circulated? *Le nouveau* Climate Change Bill is a *mascarade*. This is the first sentence; that the new Climate Change Bill is nothing less than a masquerade. Unfortunately, the acts and omission of the hon. Minister add credence to the accusation since a number of his decisions and a number of his failures to act are clearly adverse to our need to take action to reduce or negate the adverse effect, at least, some of the adverse effects of climate change.

Mr Speaker, what is the first complaint? The first complaint relates to environmentally sensitive areas, which in our ecosystem consist mainly of mangroves, wetlands and sand dunes. For those who may not be aware, environmentally sensitive areas are very important from the climate point of view inasmuch as they act as carbon sinks, with rates of carbon sequestration, which are often even higher than those of tropical rain forests. Our coastal ecosystem encompasses these environmentally sensitive areas which are, therefore, important in mitigating climate change in view of the fact that they hold what is known as the blue carbon. The environmentally sensitive areas are also valuable for climate change adaptation inasmuch as they protect people from coastal erosions, storms and flooding. Yet, in its first mandate, this Government has already taken decisions which have caused or will irremediably cause the destruction of numerous environmentally sensitive areas and the hon. Minister has failed to review these decisions as well as Government policy in respect of the ESA, despite being urged to do so by the civil society. On the contrary, as rightly demonstrated by the NGO "*Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz*" in its communication to the media, as I have stated, less than a month ago, on the very week preceding the decision of Cabinet to clear the Climate Change Bill for its introduction before the National Assembly, the hon. Minister approved an EIA Licence for a hotel project at Les Salines, Rivière Noire, on an environmentally sensitive area consisting of wetlands, mangroves, dunes, and a barachois. This project, added to the six other hotel projects approved by this Government in the region will, undoubtedly, adversely affect the environmentally sensitive areas and indicate the little or no commitment of the Minister to tackle climate change.

Let me now come to the proposed enactment of section 7(1) (a) of the *Pas Géométriques* and the new section 69 of the State Lands Act, as appears in clause 30 of the Bill. The effect of both these sections is that a person to whom a lease is granted under the

Pas Géométriques Act or the State Lands Act shall not alter or change any marsh, lake or sand dunes and mangroves. But this is not good enough! The obligation should also apply to any person to whom the lease has been granted. If the hon. Minister is serious about protection of the environmentally sensitive areas, I invite him to bring an amendment to clauses 34 and 6 of the Bill, so that it reads -

“Any person to whom a lease is or has been granted under *Pas Géométriques* Act or the State Lands Acts shall not alter or change any marsh, lake or sand dunes and mangroves;”

Now, when the Minister, with pomp, talks of civil society, interactive session with members of the public but, in fact, there is limitation on civil society, and I will explain when I refer to the Climate Change Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the involvement of the civil society in issues of climate change and environmental protection has become increasingly important all over the world. Yet, when one looks at the Climate Change Bill brought before this House by the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate change, what becomes obvious is that the role of the civil society is nearly totally dwarfed if not rendered useless, that is, of little or no importance, and this is indeed obvious when one looks at the composition of what are essentially the three main committees set up under the proposed Bill, namely –

1. The Climate Change Committee proposed under clause 11.
2. The Committee responsible for the formulation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan under clause 13 of the Bill.
3. The Committee responsible for the formulation of the National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan under clause 14 of the Bill.

Five members of the Climate Change Committee, among whom one representative of the civil society having knowledge and wide experience in climate change matters and appointed under clause 11(1), and 28 members under the Second Schedule to the Bill.

Thus, out of 33 members of the Climate Change Committee, which has tremendously important functions to be found at clause 11(3) of the Bill, only one is from civil society and, even then, he is appointed by the Minister. When we know the propensity of this Government to nepotism and *copinage*, it can be expected that the Minister’s appointee is likely to be one of their chamchas. Be that as it may, many informed observers have opined that there is a

clear attempt to keep civil society, as I have stated earlier, from decision-making process in environmental and climate change matters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, not only has the civil society been limited to participate but they have been evicted from the Mitigation Strategy and the Action Plan. The situation regarding the eviction of the civil society from the decision-making process in climate change issues contrary to international norms is even more shocking when one refers to the Committee responsible for the formulation of the National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan under clause 14 of the Bill. By the combined operation of clause 14 and the Fourth Schedule to the proposed Climate Change Bill, there are shockingly 42 Ministries, Departments and other specified bodies from the public and private sectors, but not a single member of the civil society who has been designated to collaborate with the new Department of Climate Change responsible for the formulation of the Plan.

On the other hand, we know that the National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan must be formulated by virtue of clause 14 subsection 2(b) of the Bill in accordance with national development priorities which aim at achieving low level greenhouse gas emission and a green economy. On the other hand, we know that there are important vested interests at stake because national development priorities which aim at achieving low greenhouse gas emission and green economy have a very important cost element. If one looks at the shameful treatment given to environmentally sensitive areas by this Government in the approval of projects at Les Salines, it is clear that sometimes the interaction between public and private sectors has results which are against the public good.

Accordingly, the civil society should have been a clear if not the best interlocutor to leverage the interaction between public and private sectors to ensure that decisions taken are not to the detriment of present and future generation. Yet, what do we find? There is only one representative of civil society to be appointed by the Minister out of the 33 members of the Climate Change Committee to be set up under clause 11(1) and the Second Schedule to the Bill. This is particularly shameful when one realises the tremendous interest at stake in clause 11(3) of the Bill, which elicit the functions of the Committee. It will probably be argued, as a face-saving device, that under section 1, subclause 2, paragraph (a) of the proposed Bill, that the Climate Change Committee may, where it considers necessary, co-opt such persons and relevant expertise as may be of assistance in relation to any matter before it. But I reckon that this is only going to be another sham by this Government so far as civil society is concerned. The total absence of any representative from civil society in the formulation of a

National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan is even worse when one realises that the Plan must, under clause 14, sub-clause 2 of the proposed Bill, include national development priorities, national policies and measures for mitigation, an action plan and investment programme, information on compliance with international commitments, research and development, climate data and information, recommendations on education, training and public awareness, and approaches for monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The vested interests at stake are enormous and the eviction of the civil society altogether as a specified entity to collaborate with the Department of Climate Change in the formulation of the National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan is negligent, culpable and shameful. I suggest that the civil society should have had, at least, eight representatives on the Climate Change Committee and in the formulation of the Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is actually left for the civil society is a duty on every Government department under clause 19 of the proposed Bill to undertake public consultations for the purpose of developing strategies and policies in respect of climate change. Indeed, we are told that every Government department will hold consultations, but the hon. Minister gave no modalities for consultation, no frequency, no mechanism, no procedure. Who is to be consulted, when, and how? Government departments are made up of civil servants who are at the service of the public. They must work for public good in the public interest. Yet, contrary to accepted norms of participative democracy, the public is not part of the real decision-making process as seen in clauses 11 and 14 of the Bill. This is another instance of greenwashing. This form of marketing spin in which green PR and green marketing are deceptively used to try and persuade the public that what Government is doing is good.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is doing nothing good. What this Government is doing in terms of public consultation under clause 19 of the Bill is neither good nor right. What it is doing against public participation is bad and wrong.

Out of the eight core functions and duties, it appears that there will be no duty to consult the public inasmuch as it is only under clause 11(3) (c). If we read clause 11(3) (c), there will be a duty of public consultation as prescribed by clause 19 of the Bill; otherwise, the seven other core functions and duties of the Climate Change Committee listed in clause 11(3) (a), (b), (d) to (h) will not require any public consultation. It is meant only for one specific item, but, as for the seven other core issues, there will be no public consultation

because the element of consultation falling under the purview of clause 19 appears to be limited strictly to strategies and policies. Shamefully, clause 19, prescribing consultation, does not appear to apply to the preparation of reports, the implementation of measures, the recommendation of methods and approaches, the use of resources, nor the coordination of activities, all of which make up more than 85% of the core functions and duties of the Climate Change Committee.

Mr Speaker, apart from its culture of opacity and nepotism, this Government will go down in history for its notorious limitation and restriction of the rights of its citizens to act in relation to environmental and similar issues. Already, regarding the grant of EIA licences, the hon. Minister justified a severe limitation to the concept of aggrieved person for the purposes of lodging an appeal before the Environmental and Land Use Appeal Tribunal earlier this year. Although he keeps paying lip service to the notion of transparency in environmental decision-making, to shamelessly sponsor the amendment brought to section 54, subsection 2 of the Environment Protection Act 2002 in Section 18 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, which further restricts the decision of an aggrieved person by stating that any such person will be deprived of his right of appeal although he is able to show that the unnecessary decision is likely to cause him undue prejudice, he did not submit a Statement of Concern when the notice for public inspection of the EIA was published under Section 20 of the Environment Protection Act. So, where is the *locus standi*? Where is the right of action? And yet, the Minister is bragging, saying that there is no limitation, no restriction of rights; the citizen can certainly raise the voice, and not only raise the voice but make the voice heard, and Government will pay heed. But when we look at specific provisions of the Bill, what the Minister has said is far from the truth. An aggrieved person, as I said, will remain an aggrieved person and he will be suffering undue prejudice if he does not submit or he had not submitted earlier a Statement of Concern.

Similarly, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is atrociously lacking in this Bill is the duty of accountability which should be ascribed to policymakers and policy officers alike in such an important area as climate change.

Members of the public should have a legal right to intervene if there appears to be something going wrong in the system. Whether it be for strategies, policies, procedures, plans, projects, measures of activities, civil society should be given, at least, some *locus standi*, some legal right to act as watchdog. However, not only has this Government done its level best to reduce the right of action of well-intentioned members of the public with regard

to environmental issues under the Environmental Protection Act as amended, but, surprisingly, the Climate Change Bill is totally silent as regards the possibility of any right of action to any member of the general public, environmental NGO, or expert group whatsoever.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to clause 27. The exhaustive duty of confidentiality imposed under clause 27 of this Bill is highly questionable and raises some doubts about the good intention and sincerity of the hon. Minister regarding the protection of the environment and climate change issue. Although the issue of confidentiality may be consonant with the abusive culture of opacity of this Government, it is unduly strict that, I quote –

“ 27(1) No person shall, during or after the tenure of his office, use or disclose any matter which came to his knowledge in the performance of his duties (...) except -

(a) for the purposes of this Act - the Climate Change Act -

(b) where he is required to do so by a Court or under any enactment.”

One could understand that there should be a duty of confidentiality regarding trade secrets, sensitive information and the like, but a duty of absolute confidentiality regarding any matter is simply abusive and contrary to what should obtain in climate change issues where there should be no opacity, where there should be transparency and where the voice of the public has to be heard.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in an article entitled ‘Waste Management and Climate Change’ published in the International Journal of Justice and Sustainability, it was stated that waste management has, at least, five types of impact on climate change.

These are respectively -

- (1) landfill methane emissions;
- (2) reduction in industrial energy use and emissions due to recycling and waste reduction;
- (3) energy recovery from waste;
- (4) carbon sequestration due to decreased demand following reuse, and
- (5) reduction of energy use in and the cost of transportation of waste.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if there is an area where the hon. Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management has again been guilty of culpable omission, contradictory action, undue delay and lack of seriousness of purpose, it is indeed in the field

of solid waste management. And I will refer to a PNQ which I put to the Minister to highlight the solid waste inconsistencies. I wish here to briefly refer to my PNQ addressed to the Minister on 07 July, that is, nearly four months ago. And on behalf of the nation and in the public interest, I appeal to Government, through him, to set aside the Waste to Energy Incineration Plant for which the CEB had launched a tender and was in final negotiation.

I understand that his Ministry has already signed a Waste Supply Energy Agreement in this respect to provide 1,000 tonnes of solid wastes every day for the purpose of this tender to start out with, out of the 1,400 tonnes generated every day in this country. I made this appeal, because although the Minister was bragging that the country is moving towards circular economy, which is the right thing to do, this tender, unfortunately, by the CEB, strongly sponsored then by the former Deputy Prime Minister, goes exactly in the opposite direction and is contrary to sound climate change measures. Yet, he failed to give any undertaking and instead played cheap politics by referring to Gamma Coventa Waste-to-Energy Project, which never saw the light.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am stating so because this is exactly the track record of this Government. Far too often, they do just the opposite of what they say. For example, they commit blunders and then they ask people: '*Kott monn fote*'? They tell you that recruitment must be restricted in the Public Service because of COVID, except in the case of absolute necessity, but, then, they tailor-made a post of General Manager of the Mauritius Standard Bureau for Mrs Sandhya Boygah. They tell you that they took all the necessary measures in relation to the MV Wakashio, but, yet, from 25 July to 06 August, they hardly took any measure to prevent or minimise damage to the environment.

The hon. Minister told us that with the introduction of a circular economy, the management of solid waste will become an economic pillar. Yet, the National Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan will focus on resource recovery, which is the essence *per se* of the circular economy which has been elaborated since 2017 and has been approved by his Ministry; unfortunately, this has remain a dead letter. Instead, the Minister refused to cancel the tender for the incinerator, which I consider shocking and scandalous.

Another unpalatable feature of this Bill highlighted by enlightened observers appears to be the unnecessary, if not reckless duplication of entities by the hon. Minister. Let me just take the example of the National Environment Commission set up under Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act and compare with the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate

Change proposed under clause 4 of the Bill. They are nearly identical. That's why I say it's almost a copycat of specific provisions in the Environment Protection Act; nearly identical or to say the least, significantly similar. Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.2A, 4.2B, 4.2C, 4.3 of the Climate Change Bill are nearly identical to Sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.2A, 5.2B, 5.2C, 5.3 of the Environment Protection Act. So, what is the effort that the Minister has been talking of? What has he done to introduce a new Bill? He has been a sitting duck, simply enjoying the work that had been done previously and coming with no new Bill. He is not innovative, and if anything he could have said, 'I am going to bring some specific amendments to the Environment Protection Act' and lay it on the Table of the Assembly, and this would have been probably a better job.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you only have to remove the expression, as I say, Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change in the 2020 Bill and replace it by the National Environment Commission in the 2002 legislation. As a matter of fact, I must blame the Minister because there was no need to create, as I have stated, this Inter-Ministerial Council to be chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, when all the powers and functions of this proposed Inter-Ministerial Council can already be done by the National Environment Commission chaired itself by the hon. Prime Minister. In fact, if one looks at the functions and powers of the National Environment Commission under Section 6 of the Environment Protection Act 2002 and compares with the functions and powers of the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change under clause 6 of the Climate Change Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, one will see why enlightened observers speak of unnecessary, if not reckless duplication of entities by the Minister.

Indeed, the powers and functions are the same, with the only exception that those of the National Environment Commission refer to, and I quote –

“The Protection of the Environment, Environment Protection Programme, Environmental Management Projects and Programmes”

whereas those of the Council refer to climate change and climate change projects and programmes. In other words, as I stated earlier at the beginning of my intervention, it is a copy/paste exercise, which in itself wrong but becomes doubly wrong when we realise that the protection of the environment encompasses climate change. Indeed, climate change being one of the many aspects of the environmental protection, all those powers and function of the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change can already be exercised and discharged by the National Environment Commission.

Let me just compare clause 6 of the Climate Change Bill with 6(b) of the Environment Protection Act 2002. Clause 6 states that the Council shall, and I quote –

“6. Functions and powers of Council

- (b) monitor and review progress made by Government departments on climate change projects and programmes;”

For its part, Section 6(b) of the Environment Protection Act 2002 states, and I quote -

“6. Functions and powers of the Commission

- (b) review progress made by public departments on any aspect of environmental management projects and programmes;”

It is, indeed, crystal clear that the Commission can already do what the Minister is asking the proposed Council to do in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the point here is that the Commission can do anything which the proposed Council will be mandated to. Why the duplication? And is ‘*Aret Kokin Nu Laplaz*’, therefore, not right when it states that this Climate Change Bill is a masquerade? In fact, there is a notable lacuna which is unfolded when one compares the two entities. In the First Schedule to the Climate Change Bill, the hon. Minister has failed to include ‘the Minister responsible for Transport in his Inter-Ministerial Council’, whereas the latter is, under the First Schedule to the Environment Protection Act 2002, part of the National Environment Commission. Actually, when one knows the importance of transportation of Carbon Dioxide emission, this lacuna is a major omission and demonstrates that the hon. Minister has not exercised due care and supervision. It can be further observed that it does not appear to make much sense to have two entities: one, the National Environment Commission with 23 Ministers, and another, the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change with 22 Ministers, especially when the powers and functions of the Council can be exercised by the Commission. I strongly suggest to the hon. Prime Minister that the Inter-Ministerial Council should be discarded as the National Environment Commission can already do the job. This unnecessary if not reckless duplication of entities by the hon. Minister does not apply to the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change. The National Network for Sustainable Development and the Environmental Coordination Committee established under Sections 10 and 14 of the EPA Act 2002 would easily cater for the work to be done to formulate the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan

and the National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan envisaged in clauses 13 and 14 of the Bill.

The membership of the National Network for Sustainable Development is made up of, at least, 45 individuals and that of the Environmental Coordination Committee is more than 15 individuals by the combined cooperation of sections 10 and 14 and the Second and Fourth Schedules to the Environment Protection Act 2002. There will thus be no need to have two committees of 31 and 43 members under the Climate Change Bill to do what has been done under the 2002 legislation, especially as a large number of members envisaged in the 2020 bodies are already part of the 2002 entities.

Furthermore, the objects of the National Network for Sustainable Development and the mandate of the Environmental Coordination Committee as defined in sections 11 and 14 (2) of the Environment Protection Act 2002 are wide enough to encompass all climate change issues, including the formulation of the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan as envisaged in clauses 13 and 14 of the Bill. It, therefore, clearly appears that the strategy and action plan envisaged by clauses 13 and 14 and the Third and Fourth Schedules to the Climate Change Bill can be formulated by those two existing entities.

Mr Speaker, in this respect, I am incredibly informed that the National Network for Sustainable Development has met five or six times in the course of the last six years and the National Environment Commission only three times. I am not, of course, entering into a blame game, but they have to meet more often. These are important bodies. They have to be meaningful. They have to be effective and they have to pay heed. We should - and I insist on this - stop creating jobs, posts and paid committee membership unless they are necessary.

Mr Speaker, what I have said above regarding the unpalatable, unnecessary, undesirable, if not reckless duplication of entities by the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management is, in fact, applicable to all of clauses 4 to 14. I have shown how this applies to the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change under clauses 4 to 7 and the First Schedule of the Bill. I have also shown how this applies to the committees entrusted with the task of formulating the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan and Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan under clauses 13 and 14 and the Third and Fourth Schedules of the Bill.

However, if one looks at the Environment Protection Act 2002, one will see that this unpalatable duplication also applies to the Department of Climate Change and the Climate Change Committee currently envisaged from clauses 8 to 12 of the Climate Change Bill.

Mr Speaker, why is the hon. Minister so bent on creating these new entities when the tasks which they will have to perform are within the mandate of the existing entities? In fact, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed in 1992 and they are the entities which can deliver.

The Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997 and became effective in 2005 while the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015 and became effective in 2016. During all these years, these entities, created under the Environment Protection Act 2002, have been handling climate change issues.

For decades now, the Department of Environment created under section 8 of the Environment Protection Act 2002 has been delivering on climate change issues. As regards this Department of Climate Change envisaged under clauses 8 to 10 of the Bill, there is nothing which it can do which cannot be or is not currently being done by the Department of Environment. I will even postulate that whatever may be done by the Climate Change Committee envisaged under clauses 10 to 12 of the Climate Change Bill can be equally if not better done by the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Coordinating Committee set up under section 12 (a) of the Environment Protection Act.

Mr Speaker, be it as it may, it does not sound right to increase expenditure and exhaust human talents through the setting up of all these entities at a time when every rupee has to be used and optimised. To me, the hon. Minister has failed the test and, in the course of my speech, I have shown that there have been culpable inaction, delay in action, negligent act, omission and even reckless decision by the Minister.

What we want, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a full-time Minister, not a Minister who, on and off, is being seen in his notarial office. Mr Speaker, Sir, we need a Minister who is totally committed and dedicated to the issue of climate change. I expect the Minister to live up to his expectation because we are a small island with a high vulnerability index and there is no need to pay lip service, but to see to it that provisions of the legislation are fully complied with, notwithstanding that there should not be duplication of entities.

I thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Hurreeram!

(7.23 p.m.)

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I will start my intervention by immediately congratulating my hon. Colleague, Kavi Ramano, for the tremendous work that has been accomplished over his first year as Minister of Environment, Solid Waste, Management and Sustainable Development.

Domage que le Leader de l'opposition a choisi la voie de la partisanerie. Je peux le comprendre. Surement que le ministre lui donne pas mal de fil à retordre dans la circonscription numéro 18. D'où la nécessité de l'attaquer même dans ce qui a été sa profession jusqu'à maintenant. A mon humble avis, c'est très inélégant.

Minister Ramano has started off by assembling all stakeholders around the same table for the *Assises de l'Environnement* in December 16, 17 December, if I am not mistaken. And the Leader of the Opposition dares tell us here that there has been no consultation. It has been almost a year of consultation. The Minister's priority has been to go towards the organisations *qui militent pour l'environnement, société civile*. He called them altogether under one roof and has been intensively discussing with them for two days. I do not know what he should have done more. With this, he set the tone for a series of measures that this Government intends to come forward with, in order to make Mauritius a sustainable country. This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is unique in itself and covers every aspect of our mission to ensure our sustainability for centuries to come. I am not too sure what the Leader of the Opposition, whether he has an erroneous definition of the term copycat but I must agree that I like to listen to him. *J'aime bien l'écouter. Il nous sort toujours toute une collection de proverbes* ranging from copycat, lip service, proof in the pudding, old wine in new bottle. But I like this one, Mr Speaker, Sir, because this reminds me of this alliance they are trying to put together.

(Interruptions)

He has so far based his speech ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Duval!

Mr Hurreeram: I am okay with this, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we have extended our courtesy to them to listen to the Leader of the Opposition quietly. I think expecting the same courtesy for them will be an unaffordable luxury.

Mr Speaker: They will be quiet now.

Mr Hurreeram: Not very far away, hon. Dr. Boolell has been himself and his party half defendant of CT Power. There has been an article on 16 April, 2007 where he has been defending this project and it is this Government, under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, who has stopped this crime against Mother Nature. And I wonder at that time there was even people who were going for *grève de la faim* and then I wonder how much attention has he been giving to the *société civile* representative.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my colleague, hon. Minister Ramano, has waged war against single-use plastic products. As from 15 January 2021, the use of plastic forks, spoons, knives, chopsticks and even drinking pipes will be prohibited. The law regarding offences linked to the use of plastic products has been made more stringent and stricter and fines have been increased manyfold. Also, as from this month itself, we are collecting waste such as tyres and home appliances which in turn will be recovered by specialised companies for the purpose of recycling and his Ministry has started the distribution of compost bins throughout the island in order to reduce the amount of organic waste disposed in our landfills.

So, to sum it up, he has initiated more measures to protect our environment in one year than some of his predecessors have accomplished in a full mandate and some earlier were even daring to challenge him. Needless to say, no one here, not even on the other side of this House can give me the name of the previous Ministers of Environment between 2005 and 2014. This in itself tells you how valuable their contribution was to our environment. Now, my hon. colleague has brought to this august Assembly a piece of legislation that represents a landmark in our mission to adapt our country to climate change.

M. le président, le changement climatique est l'affaire de tout un chacun car il y va de la survie de notre planète. At the level of my Ministry which comprises several departments such as the Geotechnical Unit, the Engineer, the Architect, the Quantity Surveying Section, the Electrical Services Division, the Construction Industry Development Board, the Road Development Authority and the National Development Unit, the Land Drainage Authority, we are well aware of the task that lies before us.

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal and since 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed with the global mean temperature increasing by two degrees Celsius. The amount of snow and ice has drastically diminished and the sea level has risen consequently.

Recent detection of increasing trend in extreme precipitation and discharge in some catchment implies greater risk of flooding at regional scale. Besides the last two to three decades, many small islands including Mauritius considered to be the most exposed have been impacted by several episodes of high intensity rainfall leading to major flooding events.

The events of March 2013 are still fresh and vivid in the minds of all Mauritians. Sudden heavy rainfall exposed our failure to prepare and adapt to an evolving climate and we paid a heavy price. This is why this Government, upon being elected in December 2014, took bold measures and laid the foundation for sustainable development. This Government, under the prime ministership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, established the Land Drainage Authority by promulgating the Land Drainage Act in view of increasing the resilience to flooding through effective land drainage system. Since then, this division comprising qualified and very capable officers has been studying the topography of our island in order to better understand water course and measures, the unpredictability of rainfall and how waters flow during the rainy season.

With the help of South African experts, we now have the digital elevated model which allows us to have a 3D imagery of the whole island as well as Rodrigues. Two years in operation and the Land Drainage Authority has identified 280 regions in Mauritius that can be considered as flood-prone. The criteria to determine whether a particular region is flood-prone may vary from being situated in places below road or sea level to regions impacted by derocking of land and illegal construction on natural water course. From this list of 280 regions, we determine those which can be considered as high risk zones. Heavy rainfall in these places can be life threatening.

M. le président, chers parlementaires, vous l'avez bien compris, il y a urgence dû à l'incompétence du précédent régime travailliste. Il y a toujours le danger de mort d'homme dans certaines parties de l'île. The Land Drainage Authority has identified 39 such sites and 70 major drain projects are currently being designed and implemented by the NDU namely in Piton, Mapou, Plaine Magnien, Mare Tabac, Trois Boutiques, Vallée Pitot and several regions in Flacq, including Bramstan also Nouvelle France and New Grove.

In regions such as Fond du Sac, Cottage and l'Amitié which have been heavily impacted by flooding over recent years, our major drain projects are nearing completion. In total, we are going to spend around Rs4 billion over the next three years to mitigate the effect of climate change and reduce flooding to a minimum in those regions.

M. le président, nous avons un gouvernement d'action. J'irai plus loin en ajoutant que nous sommes un gouvernement avant-gardiste, nous travaillons toujours en amont n'en déplaise à certains.

The Land Drainage Master Plan is currently in preparation. The purpose of the elaboration of the Land Drainage Master Plan is to develop a strategy, an Action Plan to be implemented by the authorities to reduce the population vulnerability to heavy rainfall and flood events in the context of climate change. The first Master Plan is expected in the first quarter of 2021.

It will consist of the following –

- a flood risk map;
- a land use map;
- new parameters to be adopted in designing drainage system to minimise risk of flooding;
- drainage impact assessment guidelines;
- urban planning recommendations;
- flood-prone areas map;
- vulnerability index of the catchment.

And all this, Mr Speaker, Sir, it adds up to what this Climate Change Bill today, it's complementary, it's both are going to work hand in hand together.

In the meantime, at the level of the LDA, we are taking mitigation effects of climate change and preparedness to intense precipitations to the next level. We are closely monitoring the maintenance of 1,400 km of drains by various authorities and ensuring that those drains are kept clean for the rainy season.

Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is the intensity-duration-frequency curve. The IDF curve is a mathematical function relating to rainfall intensity with duration of the rainfall and its frequency or return period. They are commonly used in hydrological flood, forecasting and design of drain, drainage infrastructure. Mr Speaker, Sir, IDF curve dates back to 1970 - when, maybe, most of us were not even born, well, at least, for this side of the House,

because when we talk about *renouveau de la classe politique*, it is here – and was devised by the flood and agriculture organisation and since then, all hydrological studies have been based on the IDF curve of the FAO.

I am pleased to announce, Mr Speaker, Sir, that 50 years later, we have started consultation at the level of the LDA in order to derive our own IDF curve. This is warranted in order to take into account the actual climatic and topographical conditions peculiar to Mauritius. This IDF curve will be a valuable asset in our mission to protect the citizens of this country against the effects of climate change.

Former President Obama once said, and I quote –

"We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it."

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is exactly what this Government is doing. Constructing modern drains in specific regions of the island and introducing innovative measures to contain the effect of climate change are unfortunately solving only part of the problem.

This Government has placed the environment at the centre of every infrastructural development. We do not simply intend to build and construct at every corner of the island. We want it to be done intelligently while ensuring preservation and protection of the environment for a sustainable approach. Recently, inaugurated a new road by the bypass at Cap Malheureux. Constructed by the Road Development Authority, this road is specifically designed to protect drivers and surrounding areas from runoff in case of heavy rainfall by diverting the rainwater into specially designed drains.

We reconstructed the Terre Rouge-Verdun Road using a subsoil drainage system and an innovative piling system to make it more resilient. We did not hesitate one second, Mr Speaker, Sir, to ask the contractor to reconstruct the Decaen flyover at his own cost when we noted a slight deformation. Now, we will have a structure which will last for many years to come. This is what we want for our future generation and this is what this Climate Bill is all about; a built environment, an infrastructure that is fully adapted to cope with new and more severe weather conditions due to climate change.

At the level of my Ministry, we will leave no stone unturned with respect to environmental norms and standard. With a view to reducing electrical, energy consumption, T5T8 florescent lamps are more energy efficient than T8 lamps, have been installed in all public buildings as well as machine-less type elevators have replaced the traditional lifts.

They consume less power and do not require lubrication oil. We also encourage the use of solar-led technology that makes use of low power rating Led lamps at reduced electrical power cost, while maintaining a suitable level of lighting.

In line of the Kyoto Protocol, all air conditioning units in Government, Ministries, Department using R12 and R22 refrigerants have been replaced by systems using ozone-friendly refrigerants.

Moreover, the inverter type technology which uses 20% to 30% less power has been preferred. Many schools have been provided with photovoltaic panels to enable them to participate in the production of electricity for their own consumption as well as feed the CEB grid. And I have already announced in this very same Assembly, in August, during an Adjournment Matter raised by hon. Mrs Tour, the Road Development Authority has already advised potential bidders to accustom themselves to the techniques of recycling asphalt which will be effective as from January 2021.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it goes without saying that my Ministry will play a pivotal role in the implementation of this Bill. As Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development, I could not be more proud to humbly contribute to a greener and safer Mauritius. And this Bill will now make the Ministry a member of the Inter-Ministerial Council. My Ministry will fully support and facilitate the undertakings of the Department of Climate Change so as to favour the implementation of more resilient and climatically appropriate infrastructure. Our Ministry will assist in achieving this complex...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No loud conversation!

Mr Hurreeram: ...and challenging objective by providing the necessary work environment equipment...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, no loud conversation!

Mr Hurreeram: ...and trading to its technical staff.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is your opinion! Come on!

Mr Hurreeram: We will introduce the necessary laws and regulations that would ensure the early transition to an eco-friendlier and more sustainable built environment. This would also imply, Mr Speaker, Sir, for instance, energy efficient building with less running cost, less dependence on mechanical ventilation and more sustainable in the long run.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not God, and when we are faced with acts of God, we are vulnerable and exposed. However, with technological progress, increase knowledge, wisdom and more holistic approach to disaster management, we give ourselves a chance, a solid chance to reduce to minimum infrastructural damages and save lives. We are talking here, Mr Speaker, Sir, about resilience. Resilience is the ability to repel, prepare for, take into account, absorb, recover from and adapt even more successfully to actual or potential adverse events.

I have heard a lot of criticisms from the hon. Leader of the Opposition with very little commendable counterproposal. I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that climate change is a national issue, which goes beyond party politics, like Pope Francis, himself, once said: “The time for seeking global solution is running out. We can find suitable solutions only if we act together in agreement.” So, if you want to help, please do so.

This Government, on the other hand, is going to extreme length to prepare our country to face and withstand whatever Mother Nature throws our way. As I mentioned earlier, we are the last generation that can do something about climate change before it is too late. Truth be told, this is the Government which will ensure sustainable development. The real change is happening with this Government under the Prime Ministership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. So, you can either be part of this unprecedented transformation towards a greener Mauritius or sit back and watch us succeed.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Seeruttun seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Adjournment matters!

Hon. Ms Anquetil!

(7.47 p.m.)

MEDICLINIC - FLOREAL - PODIATRIST

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Je vous remercie, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de la santé. M. le président, le podologue de l'unité de podologie à la Médi-Clinique à Floréal est en congé depuis trois mois et ce départ en congé a perturbé les services de cette unité, aucun remplaçant n'a été trouvé pour rassurer les soins aux patients diabétiques ayant des complications au pied. Je fais un appel pressant au ministre pour trouver un remplaçant en urgence.

Je vous remercie M. le président.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal): Thank you very much, hon. Member. It is true that the Ministry has employed on contract only one podiatrist since many years and the podiatrist is now suffering from some serious illness and he is not able to attend work. The Ministry has already given training to Diabetic Foot Care Nurses and those Diabetic Foot Care Nurses will undergo a top up training in podiatry. This will take maybe some one or two months and then we can revive the podiatry unit so that patients suffering from problems concerning podiatry can be seen.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

(7.48 p.m.)

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - ACADEMIES

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The issue which I wish to raise concerns the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and relates to the proposed opening of academies in our educational system. 12 national colleges would be converted to academies that would run classes from Grades 10 to 13. Stakeholders in the education system are expressing their concerns on the following -

- No information is available on the final list of colleges that would be converted to academies;
- Courses offered and project implementation date;
- Eligibility criteria for students;
- Infrastructure that would be put in place such as laboratories, and
- Separate toilets in cases of co-education.

I would humbly request the hon. Minister to communicate to the stakeholders and the population at large on this important issue. Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, first of all, to thank the hon. Member for having raised this point but I would like to inform the House that all the points mentioned by the hon. Member have already been gazetted. As far as the list of academies is concerned, the number, the timing for the opening of the academies are all as per the Government gazette. This information has already been communicated.

As far as infrastructural work is concerned, this is ongoing and we expect them to be ready by the time the academies will become operational.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(7.50 p.m.)

RAHUL SULASAM STREET - POTHOLES

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The issue I am raising tonight is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. In fact, it relates to the bad state of a street in my constituency, Constituency No. 3, the name is Rahul Sulasam Street, previously called as Delhi Street. There are several potholes on part of the street that is *nid-de-poule*. The street I just mentioned is situated between Abbé Déroulède and St François Xavier Street. As we are aware, potholes are a common nuisance on our roadways, so I am making an appeal to the hon. Minister so that he can see to it that this part of the road be tarred urgently. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, we will look into it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

(7.51 p.m.)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 12 – ANGIOGRAPHY PATIENTS

Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness. It has been brought to my attention by few patients in my constituency that the waiting time for an angiography is proving to be quite lengthy. Could the hon. Minister please look into the matter for a timely solution?

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry has three centres where angiography are performed and the centres are Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospital and the Cardiac Trust. I agree that there is a waiting list, but at the same time the angiography machine dates for more than 10 years and technicians' advise that they can do about 10 tests daily but now it has been reduced to 8. Now, for Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, patients are referred to Cardiac Trust and Victoria Hospital.

I agree there is a waiting list but at the same time we are making provisions to have extra sessions so that we can curtail the waiting list at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital.

Mr Speaker: Hon. David!

(7.52 p.m.)

MORCELLEMENT SOOBRAH – BUS TRAFFIC

Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre des transports terrestre et du *light rail*, qui n'est pas dans la Chambre présentement et elle concerne la circulation des bus via le Morcellement Soobrah à Pointe aux Sables. Cette circulation a été annoncée comme une diversion temporaire pendant les travaux d'aménagement de trottoir le long d'une partie de la route côtière de Pointe aux Sables. Or, ces travaux ont débuté il y a plus d'un an et la rue principale du Morcellement Soobrah qui se retrouve empruntée par plusieurs bus quotidiennement est inadaptée à un tel trafic routier. Cette route est par conséquent grandement endommagée sans parler de problématiques de sécurité, de bruit, et des poussières. Puis-je donc demander au ministre d'examiner cette situation afin que cette diversion du trafic de bus prenne fin dans les meilleurs délais pour le bien-être des habitants du Morcellement Soobrah.

Merci.

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy): M. le président, je vais faire passer le message au ministre Ganoo et il répondra en temps et lieu.

Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

(7.53 p.m.)

LE MORNE BEACH - TOILETS

Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Merci M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de l'Environnement, de la Gestion des Déchets Solides et du Changement Climatique, sous lequel ministère se trouve le *Beach Authority*, une demande pour la construction des toilettes sur la plage du village du Morne qui est un lieu très fréquenté les week-ends et aussi un lieu de rendez-vous familial. Merci.

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): M. le président, je transmettrai la doléance à l'autorité concernée. On va voir s'il y a lieu de construire des nouvelles toilettes ou bien d'aménager les toilettes existantes. De toute façon je garderai le contact avec l'honorable membre.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nagalingum!

(7.54 p.m.)

TREFLES –YOUTH CENTER

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission, allow me to come once more on a problem affecting the youths of Constituency No. 19, Stanley and Rose Hill, namely the state of the *Centre des Jeunesse* of Trèfles. This Social Centre usually welcome numerous youths, people of the locality. It offers sane activities to them and at the same time help them from falling into social malpractices like drug addiction. This centre, *Centre des Jeunesse*, is in a pitiful state and is not functioning properly. Repair works have to be urgently undertaken. The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation stated some time back when I raised this issue at adjournment time that he was going to look into the matter urgently. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, nothing has been done till now. Will the hon. Minister kindly inform the House why and when will those repair works be done?

The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint):

M. le président, j'aurais bien apprécié que l'honorable membre me signale un petit peu en avance, j'aurais pu lui donner les réponses exactes. Donc, il y va de soi que je n'ai pas tous ces renseignements à l'heure actuelle.

Alors, le Centre de jeunesse de Trèfles avait été vandalisé pendant le confinement. Alors, le centre était un centre qui était un très bon centre et malheureusement, pendant le confinement, il y a eu beaucoup des actes de vandalisme et nous avons entrepris - au fait, c'est le centre de Trèfles et le centre de Roche Bois, deux centres qui ont été vandalisés pendant le confinement, et nous avons démarré les procédures pour rénover et réparer tout ce dont de toutes les choses qui ont été endommagées. Mais à l'heure actuelle, là, je ne peux absolument rien vous dire parce que je n'ai pas les renseignements nécessaires. *Next time*, faites-moi savoir en avance.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

(7.56 p.m.)

PLAINE VERTE YOUTH CENTRE - SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports. As you are probably aware, the Plaine Verte Youth Centre is closed since last December. Next month, it will be exactly one year since the youngsters of this region have been deprived of sports activities. I, therefore, request the hon. Minister to kindly find a suitable solution at the earliest so as not to penalise them any further.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Who is answering to that?

The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint):

Je répondrai de la même façon. Malheureusement, l'honorable membre ne m'a pas donné préavis de ce problème. Je vais voir ce qu'on peut faire.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

(7.57 p.m.)

PORT LOUIS - SYNTHETIC FOOTBALL PLAYGROUNDS

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):

Thank you. I would like to raise an issue addressed to the Minister of Local Government. It concerns the synthetic football playgrounds in Port Louis. There are several in my constituency, in Champs de Mars, in La rue Harris, in Vallée Pitot, but none of them are operational. There is no lighting, the infrastructures are really in poor conditions and the municipality is not allowing anyone to play. So, it is being months now. So, I would really appreciate if the hon. Minister can take up the matter with the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Thank you. As you are aware, there has been just like mentioned earlier by the Minister of Youth and Sports, the *terrains synthétiques* were functional, but, unfortunately, because of vandalism, now people just break everything. I mean, the lights are broken, the breaker is broken and that is why we are having a problem with a lot of the synthetic pitch. But, anyway, I am going to transmit the message to the Municipality of Port Louis.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

(7.59 p.m.)

TRANQUEBAR - WOMAN CENTRE - SHELTER

Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. I humbly request the Minister to see to it if the women's centre at Tranquebar can be made available during torrential rains, flash floods or cyclones to distressed families during those difficult days since the current use of the boxing centre do pose problems for the ongoing training of athletes.

Thank you.

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah): I thank the hon. Member for putting this to the House and I shall look into it and revert back. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(7.59 p.m.)

ALBION & CANOT – TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête ce soir s'adresse à l'honorable ministre du Transport routier et du *Light Rail*, l'honorable Alan Ganoo, et concerne un problème récurrent dont font face les résidents d'Albion et de Canot par rapport au feux de signalisation, à l'entrée de Canot/Albion, qui tombe souvent en panne causant, par la même occasion, un gros embouteillage le matin et de surcroît un stress pour celles et ceux qui empruntent cette route, venant des différents morcellements vers Canot.

Merci à l'honorable ministre ou à son suppléant de bien vouloir s'assurer que ces feux soient rapidement réparés quand ils tombent en panne. Merci.

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy): M. le président, je vais faire le nécessaire et informer le ministre.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

(8.00 p.m.)

VACOAS - SEEWA BAPPOO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – DEPUTY RECTOR - TRANSFER

Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Merci, M. le président. J'aimerais attirer l'attention de l'honorable ministre de l'Education sur un énième cas de transfert de recteur dans les collèges d'État. Dans ce cas présent, le *Deputy Rector* du Seewa Bappoo State Secondary School de Vacoas se voit transférer au Royal College de Curepipe et ce transfert a fait l'objet de nombreuses plaintes de la part des parents d'élèves.

Je souhaiterais demander à l'honorable ministre de bien vouloir porter attention à ce nouveau cas et de bien vouloir s'assurer que les transferts aient lieu en tout début d'année ou à la fin des années scolaires, étant donné que cela perturbe la vie scolaire et les élèves eux-mêmes. Merci.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Merci. M. le président, je dois faire ressortir que l'exercice de transfert se fait au niveau du ministère suite à des événements. Par exemple, dans le cas du Collège Royal de Curepipe, le recteur a été promu à un poste d'administrateur et de ce fait, il a fallu bouger quelqu'un d'autre pour remplacer le recteur.

Et, c'est pour cela qu'on a dû le faire là, au beau milieu de l'année au lieu d'attendre le début de l'année. Quand il y a des cas de promotion, on ne peut pas faire autrement.

Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Gungaparsad!

(8.01 p.m.)

YAUM NABI CELEBRATIONS - LOWER VALE - GREEN TENT

Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development. In the context of the Yaum Nabi Celebrations in Lower Vale, the President of the Silsila E Qadriya Sunni Society has requested the collaboration of your Ministry for the erection of a 5,000 feet green tent for this Sunday 08 November 2020.

I will hand over a copy of the letter to you at the end of the session. On behalf of the president and members of the Silsila E Qadriya Sunni Society of Lower Vale, I thank you in advance for kindly doing the needful.

Thank you.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure my hon. colleague will appreciate that when we provide tents, there is a process that we need to follow and obviously, it is not in this august Assembly that we will come with request for tents. And I am not sure if we have received that request at the level of my Ministry, otherwise we would have looked into. We have limited budget, we have limited means. So, it is on a first come, first served basis. As I know, the Vice-Prime Minister has already looked into a full list of - all we have been working on it together. So, we will see to it. I am not sure, I cannot promise him anything, now. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

(8.03 p.m.)

HIGHLANDS – ENDEMIQUES ROAD – WATER LEAKAGE

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My humble request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Utilities. It concerns water leakage or water loss at Rue des Endémiques which is found between *Morcellement* Lonhro, Highlands and Cité Cinquante, Highlands.

Several complaints have been made since February 2020 and the last one was made on 15 September 2020, but, up to now, the CWA has failed to attend the spot to look into the matter. Could the hon. Minister use his good office to look into the matter, please?

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr G. Lesjongard): Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Definitely, I will request CWA to look into the matter, confirm the dates the leakages occurred, because this must have been reported to the hotline service and get the needful to be done.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Wochit!

(8.04 p.m.)

PAMPLEMOUSSES - D'EPINAY - DRAIN

Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed today to hon. Hurreeram. There is a drain adjacent to Restaurant Loulou at d'Epinay, Pamplemousses which has not been completed and this represents a permanent danger to the inhabitants over there. The drain is at least two metres deep from road level. I request the hon. Minister to do the needful at the earliest convenience, as this project has been dragging on for at least five to six years.

Thank you.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Luckily, my hon. friend does not fell into, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will consult the PPS of the region, hon. Ramkaun, and we will look into the matter together. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Armance!

(8.05 p.m.)

LA TOUR KOENIG – MOBILE LIBRARY

Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My request tonight goes to the hon. Minister of Local Government.

C'est concernant précisément le service de bibliobus dans la région de Débarcadères et Coquillages, service qui fut interrompu en août 2020. Donc, actuellement, les enfants ne bénéficient pas du service gratuit de la municipalité pour les livres et on leur demande de partir à la Municipalité de Port Louis pour bénéficier des livres gratuits. Malheureusement,

dans la pratique des choses, cela ne peut pas se faire, parce que La Tour Koeing, Débarcadères et Coquillages, il faut prendre un bus pour aller à la municipalité, et je demanderai au ministre de bien vouloir revoir la décision de ne plus avoir les bibliobus dans la région de Débarcadères et Coquillages.

Merci.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, it's not my decision; it's the decision of the Municipal Council because after the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic situation is a bit difficult. I don't know whether that is the reason why it was cancelled, but anyway I am going to talk to them.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

(8.06 p.m.)

CAMP YOLOFF COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I address myself to the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development. Last year, I addressed the same issue concerning the Camp Yolloff Community Centre and I was told at that time that budget and everything was ready, but still nothing has been done. So, I will ask my colleague Minister to look urgently into the matter. Thank you.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, Community Centres do not fall under the purview of my Ministry. I am not too sure what more, even the infrastructure. It falls under the Ministry of Gender and they have their own budget to look into that type of matter. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: No further adjournment matter, so I suspend the sitting.

At 8.07 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POUDRE D'OR - AIR-SEA RESCUE OPERATION 31 AUGUST 2020

(No. B/672) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the air-sea rescue operation at Poudre d'Or in the night of Monday 31 August 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) rank of the officer of the Police Helicopter Squadron responsible therefor,
- (b) number of Helicopters requisitioned therefor,
- (c) reasons as to why another helicopter, adapted to effect night rescue operations, was not requisitioned therefor, and
- (d) time at which the bowser was requested to attend to the refuelling of the helicopter/s at Poudre d'Or, indicating the time taken therefor.

(Withdrawn)

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION LTD - EMPLOYEES - ALLEGED CASES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING - JANUARY 2015-OCTOBER 2020

(No. B/673) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of employees involved in alleged cases of drug trafficking, since January 2015 to October 2020, within the Port area indicating –

- (a) their respective grades,
- (b) whether a security profiling exercise is carried out prior to their recruitment thereat, and
- (c) measures taken by the Corporation to enhance the surveillance system thereat.

(Withdrawn)

**ELECTORAL REFORMS - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - GENDER
REPRESENTATION**

(No. B/674) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the electoral reforms, in particular for enhancing gender representation in the National Assembly, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of a Bill in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**PREVENTION OF RESURGENCE AND FURTHER SPREAD OF
EPIDEMIC DISEASE (COVID-19) REGULATIONS 2020 - OFFENCES - ARRESTS**

(No. B/675) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the offences under the Prevention of Resurgence and Further Spread of Epidemic Disease (COVID-19) Regulations 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of persons –

- (a) arrested;
- (b) prosecuted, and
- (c) convicted thereunder, indicating in each case the nature of the offence.

(Withdrawn)

ADSU – DISBANDMENT

(No. B/676) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, he will state if consideration will be given for the disbandment thereof following the recent arrest of two officers thereof for alleged cases of money laundering.

Reply: The existence of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) dates back to 1983. ADSU is mainly responsible for preventing and detecting offences in connection with

dangerous drugs. The ADSU is headed by a Deputy Commissioner of Police who is assisted by 486 Police Officers, all ranks inclusive.

Since its inception, ADSU has engaged itself in the relentless fight against dangerous drugs leading to recent record seizure of drugs. Over the time, it has built up a strong intelligence network with local, regional and international Law Enforcement Agencies by sharing/exchanging valuable information on dangerous drugs. This has resulted in an increase of its operational effectiveness.

ADSU, being an integral part of the Mauritius Police Force, has at its immediate disposal various resources to support its operations at short notice. Units and Branches such as the Special Mobile Force, Special Support Unit, Police Helicopter Squadron, *Groupe d'Intervention de la Police Mauricienne* (GIPM), NCG Commandos and Police Dog Unit are available on a 24/7 basis to assist ADSU personnel in the conduct of crackdown operations in drug prone areas.

ADSU is constantly being upgraded and is provided with state-of-the-art equipment with a view to reinforcing its efficiency. In addition, the Police Officers posted thereto are given tailor-made local and overseas training to enhance their operational standard.

A proper background check of Police Officers is carried out prior to their posting to ADSU. The aim of this exercise is to ensure that Officers are not under report, are of exemplary conduct, have a high sense of integrity, and are not prone to any malpractices. However, it is unfortunate that whilst serving at the different units stated earlier, a few officers have deviated from established Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

As at date, out of 487 Police Officers posted at the ADSU, only 5 have been involved in malpractices and interdicted from duty. This constitutes only one percent of its workforce. On this basis, there is no valid reason for the disbandment of ADSU. The Unit is widely recognised for its remarkable achievement in the fight against dangerous drugs, and the vast majority of Police Officers serving thereat are of high integrity and are staunchly committed in our national endeavor to make Mauritius a drug free society.

CARRIER LSS SUCCESS - DRUGS

(No. B/677) Mr R. Woochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to drugs found on board of the carrier LSS Success on 13 June 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

*(Withdrawn)***MBC - DIRECTOR GENERAL**

(No. B/678) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –

- (a) since when the post of Director General thereof is vacant, indicating who has been appointed in an acting capacity,
- (b) when the vacancy will be filled, and
- (c) if the Corporation is presently fulfilling its duties in a fair and equitable manner as per section 4 of the MBC Act, in particular, with regard to the broadcast of news bulletins.

*(Withdrawn)***SIR GAËTAN TUG - CREW MEMBERS - DEATH**

(No. B/679) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the tragic death of 3 crew members of the tug Sir Gaëtan which sunk on 31 August 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority, information as to –

- (a) if any compensation has been paid to the bereaved families and, if so, when, and
- (b) the additional support extended to the families to alleviate their hardship.

(Withdrawn)

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PRIVATE JETS - QUARANTINE
PROCEDURES**

(No. B/680) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to private jets, he will state the number thereof that have been granted permission to land at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport since 20 March 2020 to date, indicating in each case –

- (a) the date of application and approval thereof;

- (b) the number of passengers;
- (c) their respective ports of embarkation;
- (d) purpose of the visit, and
- (e) if all quarantine procedures were followed for the passengers and members of the crew thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL

(No. B/681) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Freedom of Information Bill, he will state where matters stand in regard to the consultation process initiated therein, indicating the expected date of the introduction thereof in the National Assembly.

(Withdrawn)

DR. C. G. - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/682) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to Dr. C. G., he will state the –

- (a) post held;
- (b) terms and conditions of appointment thereof including the salary and benefits drawn;
- (c) duties assigned thereto, and
- (d) mode and criteria for the recruitment thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MINOR N. M. R. A. - KIDNAPPING & SEXUAL ASSAULT

(No. B/683) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the alleged case of kidnapping of and sexual assault on minor N. M. R. A. reported at CID Pamplemousses on 10 October 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been initiated thereinto, indicating the vehicle used to convey the victim to the hospital.

(Withdrawn)

AGALEGA – AIR STRIP & NEW JETTY

(No. B/684) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the construction of an air strip and a new jetty in Agalega, he will state -

- (a) where matters stand in each case, and
- (b) the number of foreigners present on the island indicating the number of
 - (i) civilians, and
 - (ii) military personnel deployed therefor.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE JET – FILM CREW – QUARANTINE PROTOCOL

(No. B/685) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the members of the film crew who landed in Mauritius on the 08 August 2020 by a private jet for the shooting of the film entitled “Prisoners in Paradise”, he will state as to whether they were subjected to the Quarantine protocol indicating, if any member thereof was tested Covid positive.

Reply (Minister of Health and Wellness): I am informed that a batch of 54 members of the cast and crew of the production of the film ‘Prisoners in Paradise’ arrived on 10 August 2020 by a private flight and were accommodated at Le Voilà Bagatelle from 10 August to 24 August 2020. All the COVID-19 sanitary protocols were respected. No member was found to be positive in the said batch and they were all discharged on 24 August 2020.

PAY RESEARCH BUREAU - REPORT

(No. B/686) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the release of the Report of the Pay Research Bureau, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DRUGS - INQUIRY

(No. B/687) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to drugs found on the tarmac at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport on 23 October 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated therein, indicating the number of arrests effected in connection therewith, if any.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that on Friday 23 October 2020, Air Mauritius Cargo flight MK 852 (Airbus A330-900 “Apravasi Ghat”) left Mauritius at 07.40 hours for Johannesburg, South Africa, following clearance by the Director of Civil Aviation. The General Cargo flight crew comprised three Mauritian nationals. At 17.55 hours on the same day, the General Cargo flight was back to Mauritius with the same flight crew members onboard.

When a plane lands, the contents of toilets have to be siphoned and casted away. This is usually done by pushback operators. On that specific day, Mr M.F.U., pushback operator at Air Mauritius, was on duty and carried out the drainage of the Cargo flight’s toilets. Whilst doing so, he encountered certain technical problems whereby he had to seek the assistance of aircraft engineers. Following inspection of the waste drain trap, it was noticed that the drainage pipe was blocked and had to be cleared. During this process, a cylindrical shaped parcel of about 25 cm long fell on the tarmac. The unidentified parcel was wrapped in a blue plastic bag, and since it was suspicious, the Police was convened.

ADSU Officers along with Police Officers and Customs Officers posted at the Airport arrived immediately on the spot. Personnel of Airport of Mauritius Ltd (AML) were called to scan the unidentified parcel with a metal detector. However, the results were inconclusive. The services of the Scene of Crime Officers (SOCO) were enlisted and swabs were taken for DNA analysis.

The exhibit was secured by ADSU personnel in the presence of Customs Officers. During the opening of the parcel, the Officers found a significant amount of powder which was suspected to be dangerous drugs.

On the same day, a thorough search of the aircraft was effected by ADSU and Officers of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) with the assistance of Customs Dogs. However, nothing incriminating was found.

The gross indicative weight of the suspected drug parcel is seven hundred and thirty eight grams. The exhibit was sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for examination and the FSL report has been submitted to ADSU on Friday 30 October 2020.

The Commissioner of Police has further informed that eight persons have been interviewed by ADSU as part of the investigation. No one has been arrested as at 30 October 2020. The enquiry is underway. Furthermore, ADSU has solicited the help of its counterpart at Johannesburg Airport in South Africa, so as to obtain more information related to the case.

**AIR MAURITIUS LTD - FEMALE PREGNANT CABIN CREW –
ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION**

(No. B/688) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information, as to whether there has been any recent case of alleged discrimination in regard to four female pregnant cabin crew and, if so, indicate if an inquiry has been initiated thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**PUBLIC ENTERPRISES DEBT - LOAN AMOUNT & ACCRUED
INTERESTS**

(No. B/708) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to Public Enterprises Debt, he will give details of the loan amount and accrued interests as at to date in respect to each and every Public Enterprises.

Reply: Les données sur la dette en date de fin septembre 2020 pour chaque entreprise publique ayant une dette ont été publiées sur le site web de mon ministère le 30 octobre 2020.

**MAURITIUS - SOUTH EASTERN COAST & POUDRE D'OR - DOLPHINS -
DEATH**

(No. B/709) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the stranded dolphins found along the south eastern coast of the island and at Poudre d'Or, he will state if forensic tests have been carried out to determine the cause of death, indicating the results thereof.

Reply: I am informed that, on 26 August 2020, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry was notified of the presence of dead marine mammals in the lagoon of Grand Sables and Petit Sables.

From 26 August 2020 to 14 September 2020, a total of 52 dead marine mammals have been retrieved from the lagoons in the south east, including one in Poudre d'Or. 51 have been identified as melon-headed whales and one as a bottlenose dolphin.

In order to identify the causes of the death of the marine mammals, my Ministry sought the assistance of the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to carry out necropsies on the carcasses.

26 necropsies were performed from 26 August to 04 September 2020, including one on the bottlenose dolphin.

Lacerations, broken jaw bones, large bite wounds, empty stomachs, congested and emphysematous lungs, acoustic fat haemorrhage and gas embolism were found to be the most common lesions.

As per the overall interpretation of the results by the Veterinary Services, the main cause of the death of the melon-headed whales is barotrauma, that is, the physical damage to body tissues caused by a difference in pressure and which could have been triggered by a multitude of factors such as navy sonar, oil industry airguns, undersea earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

With a view to probing further, swabs and samples of the liver, lung, stomach content, kidney, skin, blood, melon, spleen, adrenal gland, intestine and swabbing taken from the body parts of 19 melon-headed whales and one bottlenose dolphin were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for toxicology and aliphatic hydrocarbon residues analysis by the Veterinary Services.

I am informed that the toxicological screening yielded negative results in all the samples whereas aliphatic hydrocarbon was detected in samples from 11 whales.

As regards the dead melon-headed whale found in Poudre d'Or, I am informed that the carcass was in a necrosed and eviscerated state, and its death is attributed to septicæmia and hypovolemic shock.

The House may wish to note that a similar phenomenon was observed in the year 2005 when some 70 melon-headed whales were stranded in the lagoon of Bois des

Amourettes. Out of the 70 whales, 35 had died in the lagoon and the remaining were directed to the outer lagoon by creating a sound wall.

A similar exercise was carried out on 28 August 2020 by officers of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre with the participation of local artisanal fishers and pleasure craft operators to herd out a pod of 150 live mammals through “*la passe Danois*” towards the high seas.

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL WRECKAGE - COMPENSATION

(No. B/710) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the compensation claims from the insurance company in relation to the environmental and economic impact caused by the MV Wakashio Vessel wreckage, he will state where matters stand.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/700)

ROAD ACCIDENTS (FATAL) – JANUARY 2020-28 OCTOBER 2020 – SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS

(No. B/711) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the number of fatal road accidents since January 2020 to date, he will state –

- (a) the age group thereof, and
- (b) if a sensitization campaign in respect thereof has been conducted.

Reply: I am informed by the Police that since January 2020 to 28 October 2020, 97 fatal road accidents have been reported where 106 persons were killed. The age group of the victims is detailed as follows –

Age Group	No of Victims
Under 15	4
16-25	22

26-50	52
51-59	11
60 years and above	17
Total	106

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that for the period January 2020 to 28 October 2020, the Traffic Branch has conducted sensitisation campaigns on road safety aspects, wherein 18,421 persons attended. The campaigns included lectures on road safety, exhibitions, roll over simulator amongst others.

Moreover, my Ministry has recently carried out a campaign focusing on Modification of Road User Behaviour. The campaign was carried out on social media, MBC Television, radio channels, billboards and bus backs posters.

My Ministry launched a ‘Zero Accident Campaign’ on 06 October 2020. The aim of this campaign is to sensitise employees of the public and private sector on a Road Safety Charter, which has been prepared by my Ministry with a view to attaining ‘zero accident’ for all employees of both public and private sectors and also to reduce the direct and indirect costs of accidents. On the same day, my Ministry also launched the ‘Light Rail Vehicle Level Crossing’ Campaign which focuses on Light Rails Vehicle (LRV) Level Crossing Safety to inform, educate and sensitise the population on the new road environment with the introduction of Light Rails in Mauritius.

A Continuum of Road Safety Education (RSE) has been introduced in primary schools and 885 Holistic teachers have been trained. The RSE focus on three specific themes, namely the child as a pedestrian, the child as a passenger and the child as a cyclist. Training on practical part of the RSE started in March 2020 but had to be halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions are ongoing with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology to introduce RSE in secondary schools.

In the context of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on 15 November 2020, my Ministry is organising a Road Safety Week from 16 to 21 November 2020, whereby a series of activities will be organised in order to sensitise the public on road safety issues.

I further wish to inform the House that a series of actions under the National Road Safety Strategy are being undertaken as follows –

(i) Research and Development Programme.

A road Safety Observatory has been set up at the University of Mauritius to carry out Research works, outreach and for capacity Building for road safety officers. Four projects on road safety will be undertaken, namely –

- (a) measuring the socio-economic costs of road traffic accidents in Mauritius;
- (b) understanding Pedestrian Use of Crossing Facilities in Mauritius;
- (c) investigating the performance of different road lighting technologies and their effect on road safety, and
- (d) understanding Road Users' Behaviours and Attitudes in Mauritius.

(ii) Improving Safety Standards of our Roads.

Hazardous Roads and road sides are treated with road accident countermeasures and road safety devices, including crash barriers, reflectorised delineators, catseyes, road concrete kerbs, traffic calming measures and review of speed limits amongst others.

(iii) Strengthening the Road Traffic Laws.

Laws have been made more stringent by providing for tougher penalties with respect to dangerous driving, drink driving, exceeding speeding limits, driving without licence and so on.

Fixed Penalty Notice fines have also been increased for some serious offences and the number of offences under the Fixed Penalty Notice Regime has been increased. Drug driving laws have been made and will be implemented this year after procurement of test kits by the Police.

My Ministry is presently working on different amendments to be brought to the law in order to provide for tougher penalties.

(iv) Enhancing of detection of Road Traffic Offences.

The speed camera system is being maintained to track down drivers exceeding the speed limits.

MAURITIUS POST LTD - PARCELS - LOCKDOWN PERIOD - DELIVERY

(No. B/712) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to parcels, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Post Ltd., since the lockdown period to date, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof undelivered, and
- (b) if special means have been deployed to ensure that parcels purchased from other countries reach the recipients within a proper time frame.

(Withdrawn)

VALLÉE DES PRÊTRES – INCINERATOR

(No. B/713) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the incinerator at Vallée des Prêtres, he will state the date of the coming into operation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

COVID-19 SOLIDARITY FUND - MOGAS & GAS OIL - LEVY

(No. B/714) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum of funds –

- (a) collected to date, indicating the amount thereof representing the levy on the sale of mogas and gas oil, and
- (b) disbursed, indicating the criteria for disbursement.

Reply: J'ai été informé, qu'au 30 octobre 2020, le *COVID-19 Solidarity Fund* a collecté 328,712,321.19 roupies, un montant total sur lequel 139,520,152 roupies ont été

générées par le prélèvement sur la vente du carburant et collectées par la *State Trading Corporation*.

Au regard de la partie (b) de la question, j'ai été informé qu'au 30 octobre 2020, le *COVID-19 Solidarity Fund* a déboursé une somme totale de 134,266,500 roupies.

Les critères utilisés pour allouer une assistance financière sont comme suit –

- les ménages qui ont été directement ou indirectement impactés par la Covid-19, et
- les organisations et institutions des projets, programmes ou actions spécifiques dans le but de soulager les ménages et les individus affectés par la Covid-19, à condition –
 - d'avoir un statut juridique ;
 - de mettre en œuvre des projets, programmes ou actions spécifiques sans but lucratif ;
 - de tenir des registres appropriés, et
 - s'engagent à faire rapport au Fonds sur la mise en œuvre de leurs projets, programmes ou actions.

MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/715) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to investment made at the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., since its incorporation to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) number of applications –
 - (i) received and processed therefor in each case, and
 - (ii) approved, indicating the name thereof and amount invested thereinto, and
- (b) criteria used for the selection thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/692)

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK - ALLEGED FRAUD

(No. B/716) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to alleged fraud perpetrated by Mr N. M. and his team to the prejudice of Punjab National Bank, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to if the Commission has conducted any investigation in relation thereto to ascertain if any Mauritian entities are involved therein, indicating the outcome of such investigation, if any, and
- (b) state the measures, if any, taken in connection therewith.

Reply: I am informed by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) that, in 2018, the Commission took cognisance of an Indian Press article on a fraud involving Mr N. M.

Media Reports from India revealed that, in terms of foreign funds, one Global Business Company (GBC) based in Mauritius was involved. Subsequently, the FSC sought for additional information from its international counterparts and also requested for a Compliance Report from the local Management Company. No adverse report was received by the FSC on the GBC.

The FSC is closely monitoring the matter as the case is ongoing and involves different local and overseas agencies.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as at date, no case has been reported against Mr N. M. at the Central Criminal Investigation Department (CCID). However, following an arrest warrant issued by the Indian Authorities for various criminal offences, the Interpol has issued a Red Notice against him.

Furthermore, according to various Press articles regarding the matter involving Mr N. M., the fugitive *diamantaire*, it is reported that the latter's bail plea had been rejected in a UK Court. The Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate of India are seeking Mr N. M.'s extradition and are being represented by the Crown Prosecution Service

in the UK. It is also reported that the fugitive businessman has applied for political asylum in UK after he was denied bail five times.

Other articles report that Mr N. M's custody has been extended for the next Extradition Hearing set for 03 November 2020. At that next hearing, the Court will be presented with arguments regarding the admissibility of the evidence provided by the Indian Authorities for Mr N. M.'s extradition.

WATER SUPPLY - DISRUPTIONS

(No. B/717) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water sector, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –

- (a) level of water in the reservoirs, and
- (b) regions severely affected by interruptions in water supply, indicating the remedial measures taken in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/696)

CEB - TRAINEE TECHNICIANS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/718) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Trainee Technicians at the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, since 2015 to date, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof recruited from the Employment services who were –
 - (i) holders of the required qualifications, and
 - (ii) not holders of full technical qualifications such as NC3, and
- (b) if any arrangement was made by the Board with the MITD with a view to allowing the unqualified trainees to sit for NC3 course in the relevant field.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD - AIR MAURITIUS - ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

(No. B/719) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether he will state if Government proposes to allocate funds from the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd., to Air Mauritius and, if so, the amount thereof and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

**NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS - PENTATHLON MODERN,
CANOEË-KAYAK & AVIRON**

(No. B/720) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the National Sports Federations, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Registrar of Associations, information as to the Pentathlon Modern, Canoë-Kayak and Aviron, indicating in each case the –
 - (i) date of Registration;
 - (ii) composition of the Executive Committee, indicating the respective club of each member, and
 - (iii) list of clubs registered therewith, indicating their respective executive committee, and
- (b) state –
 - (i) the list of competitions organised for the year 2018-2019 and 2020, indicating if his Ministry has provided any financial support thereto, and
 - (ii) if his Ministry is officially recognising these sport disciplines as National Federation under the Sports Act 2016.

(Withdrawn)

**ST-JULIEN D'HOTMAN, CAMP LEVIEUX & CALEBASSE - HOUSING
UNITS - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. B/721) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of

Tourism whether, in regard to the agreement between the National Housing Development Corporation and the National Empowerment Foundation, he will give a list of the beneficiaries, registered under the Social Register of Mauritius, of a housing unit region-wise, during the recent allocation thereof in St-Julien d'Hotman, Camp Levieux and Calebasse, respectively.

(Withdrawn)

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB – COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT

(No. B/722) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the economic and financial situation actually prevailing in Mauritius, he will state if his Ministry is considering to review the commercial agreement of around Rs400 m. signed with the Liverpool Football Club for the promotion of Mauritius as a global tourist destination.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS SOCIETY OF AUTHORS – BOARD

(No. B/723) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society of Authors, he will state –

- (a) if a new Chairperson has been appointed thereat and, if so, indicate the name of the incumbent, indicating the terms and conditions of appointment attached thereto, and
- (b) composition of the board thereof, indicating the date of nomination of each member.

(Withdrawn)

WATER SUPPLY - 24/7 BASIS

(No. B/724) Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the supply of water on a 24/7 basis across the island, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

FRONTLINERS - CONFINEMENT PERIOD – ALLOWANCE

(No. B/725) Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the proposed payment of an allowance of Rs15,000 to the frontliners mobilized during the confinement period, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD - PAY CUT

(No. B/726) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will state if –

- (a) the administrators thereof have consulted his Ministry prior to imposing a unilateral additional pay cut on the salaries of all the employees thereof and, if so, indicate when, and
- (b) his Ministry has received representations by the trade unions namely, *Plateforme Syndicale Travayer Air Mauritius* to that effect, indicating if he has discussed same with the administrators and, if so, when and if not, why.

(Withdrawn)

COVID-19 - THERAPEUTIC REGIMEN & DRUG THERAPY

(No. B/727) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to COVID-19, he will state the current therapeutic regimen and drug therapy administered for the treatment of patients tested positive therefor in mild, moderate and severe cases.

(Withdrawn)

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILL – PATIENTS – HEALTH PROBLEM

(No. B/728) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spill, he will state –

- (a) the number of reported cases of patients suffering from health problems related to the oil spill, and
- (b) if an assessment of the short and long-term effect thereof on the inhabitants of affected areas has been conducted and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILL - SEAFOOD CONTAMINATION -
ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/729) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the seafood contamination resulting from the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spill, he will state if a recent assessment on the safety of seafood consumption has been conducted and if so, indicate when and the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – CONTRIBUTIONS &
PROJECTS**

(No. B/730) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the National Social Inclusion Foundation, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) amount of Corporate Social Responsibility contributions received and receivable from the Accountant General for the period 01 July 2019 to date;
- (b) amount of cash balances and amounts receivable from the Accountant General as at to date, and
- (c) amount paid to the Non-Governmental Organisations in respect of approved projects for period 01 July 2019 to date.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Social Inclusion Foundation that for the period 01 July 2019 to 29 October 2020, the amount of Corporate Social Responsibility contributions received from the Accountant General was Rs1,155,924,191.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the amount of cash balances from the Accountant General as at date is Rs1,564,606,479.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am further informed by the National Social Inclusion Foundation that an amount of Rs617,194,394 has been disbursed to some 240 Non-Governmental Organisations for the period 01 July 2019 to date for some 485 approved projects and an amount of Rs537.2 m. remains payable by December 2020.

**STC - HANDLING OF CONTAINERS OF RICE & OTHER
COMMODITIES - SERVICE PROVIDER**

(No. B/731) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the tenders for the Handling of Containers of Rice and Other Commodities launched by the State Trading Corporation, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –
 - (i) the name of the service provider therefor, and
 - (ii) the terms and conditions of the contract, and
- (b) table the company profile of the service provider as specified in the bid document.

Reply: According to the State Trading Corporation (STC), the current service provider for the Handling of Containers of Rice and Other Commodities is Agiliss Ltd for the period 01 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Agiliss Ltd has to collect full containers of rice from Port terminals to its premises or to STC's premises, as appropriate, and be responsible for the transfer, safekeeping and storage of the containers. Agiliss Ltd –

- (i) offers unstuffing service which includes the unstuffing of rice and other commodities, and
- (ii) collects and delivers empty containers from STC's premises to the relating shipping line depot.

The company profile of Agiliss Ltd is enclosed.

GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS - INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION - LOANS SECURED

(No. B/732) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to loans secured by the Government of Mauritius from international monetary institutions, for the period 2019-2020, he will give details thereof, indicating the –

- (a) interest rates and reimbursement period thereof;
- (b) guarantee provided by Government in each case, and
- (c) the disbursement thereof.

Reply: Je présume que l'honorable Membre fait référence aux institutions financières internationales, car il n'existe qu'une seule institution monétaire internationale, qui est le Fonds Monétaire International, c'est-à-dire le FMI.

Au cours de l'exercice financier 2019-2020, le gouvernement n'a d'ailleurs contracté aucun prêt auprès du FMI. En revanche, un prêt a été contracté auprès d'une institution financière internationale, la Banque africaine de développement, le 30 mai 2020. Il s'agit d'un prêt de soutien budgétaire d'un montant de 188 millions d'euros. Une copie de l'accord de prêt a déjà été déposée.

Les termes et conditions sont les suivants :

Taux d'intérêt	: 0.65% par an
Frais initiaux uniques	: 0.25% du montant du prêt (470 000 euros)
Conditions de remboursement	: Remboursable en 30 versements semestriels après une période de grâce de 5 ans
Garantie	: Nil
Déboursments	: 8,3 milliards de roupies déboursées au 29 juin 2020, l'équivalent du montant total du prêt.

BEACH TRADERS' LICENCE - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/733) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Beach Traders Licence, he will state –

- (a) the reasons as to why the applications thereof have been frozen since 2017 to date;
- (b) the number thereof still active, giving the list thereof, region-wise, and
- (c) when application therefor will be released.

Reply (The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change): In accordance with Section 5 (c) of the Beach Authority Act 2002, the “*issue of beach traders’ licence for activities at such places on public beaches as may be specifically reserved for that purpose rests on the Beach Authority*”.

According to the Beach Authority, following the promulgation of the Beach Authority (Traders’ Licence) Regulations 2004, made under the Beach Authority Act 2002, the Authority took over the responsibility for the issue of Beach Traders’ Licence (ex-Beach Hawkers’ Licence) on public beaches from the Local Authorities. Accordingly, Beach Traders’ Licences were being issued.

It is to be noted that Section 3 of the Beach Authority (Traders' Licence) Regulations, 2004 provides for the following: *"No person shall carry on any trade in any place on a public beach, other than a designated area."* Those licences were being issued as per the zones designated by the Beach Authority.

On 04 September 2017, in respect of a case entered by a trader, the Court drew the attention of the Beach Authority that there were no designated areas on public beaches and thus, the case was set aside. Subsequently, on 05 September 2017, the Attorney General's Office advised that designated areas as per Section 3 of the Beach Authority (Traders' Licence) Regulations 2004 should be gazetted by way of Notice in the Government Gazette or through Regulations which would then give public notice thereto.

The implication of the Beach Authority not having designated any area on public beaches is that for the carrying out of a trade, the Beach Authority (Traders' Licence) Regulations 2004 are unenforceable vis-à-vis beach traders, that is, the Beach Authority cannot regulate any trade unless such trade is in a designated area on a public beach. In that respect, since 2017, no new Beach Traders' Licence has been issued.

The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has, since year 2016, embarked upon the elaboration of Beach Management Plans (BMPs) for public beaches. A Consultancy Report has accordingly been prepared and implementation thereof is expected, in the first instance, at four public beaches, namely Flic en Flac, Belle Mare, Mont Choisy and La Prairie. The BMP provides for specific designated areas for various activities to be carried out on public beaches including trade activities.

The Beach Authority is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, and other stakeholders on the surveying of designated areas for trading activities on public beaches with GPS coordinates. Thereafter, Regulations would be made and gazetted.

As regards part (b) of the question, according to the Beach Authority, a total of 453 Beach Traders' Licences have been renewed for the period 01 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, region-wise, as follows –

No. of Beach Traders' Licences renewed Region-wise

Region	No. of Licences renewed
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Northern Region (Baie Du Tombeau to Von Moltke)	196
Eastern Region (Roches Noires to Riv Des Créoles)	43
Western Region (La Prairie to Sable Noir)	143
Southern Region (Remy Ollier to Baie Du Cap)	71
TOTAL	453

A list thereof is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As regards part (c) of the question, new applications will be considered following the promulgation of the new Regulations in that respect.

CYCLONIC SEASON - YEAR 2020-2021

(No. B/734) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the forthcoming cyclonic season for the year 2020/2021, he will state the measures that have been taken by his Ministry in regard to the high risk flood prone areas.

Reply: The cyclonic season for the year 2020/2021 has started on 01 November and will end around mid of May 2021. It is a known fact that the impact of global warming and climate change has increased considerably the frequency of extreme weather around the world. Consequently, it is very likely that Mauritius and its islands will experience extreme weather conditions in the form of heavy rainfall, rapid intensification of tropical cyclones and high waves.

According to the Mauritius Meteorological Services, the onset of rain will slightly delay this season as it is expected to start by the last week of December and the number of named storms evolving in the region is likely to vary between seven and nine. The first named storm is expected by the last week of December this year or during the first week of January 2021.

Some 290 sites have been identified by the Land Drainage Authority (LDA) across the island to be prone to water accumulation and flooding. These sites include residential areas, roads, bridges, schools, health care facilities, commercial areas and other locations of socio-economic importance. It is to be highlighted that out of the 290 sites, 39 are considered by the LDA to be highly prone to flooding with risk of loss of life and property, thus resulting in serious disruption to socio-economic activities.

My Ministry has implemented several measures to reduce the risks of flooding in the 290 flood prone areas over the whole island. In this respect, a sum of Rs100 m. has been earmarked for the financial year 2020/2021 under the National Environment Fund for the construction of drains by the 12 local authorities across the island. The assistance of the Land Drainage Authority has been sought to identify priority drain works, which will ensure that the problem of flooding is addressed in an effective and sustainable manner.

In view of the rainy and cyclonic season, my Ministry works in close collaboration to carry out cleaning and desilting of drains, canals and other water courses. Each local authority has established a programme for such works and to this effect, for the coming season, my Ministry has earmarked –

- (i) an amount of Rs2 m. for each local authority for the cleaning, rehabilitation and upgrading of drains, bridges and rivers, and
- (ii) an amount of Rs1.5 m. for each local authority for the collection of bulky waste and e-waste.

In addition, in February and June 2020, backhoe loaders and dumpers have been procured for an amount of Rs75 m. for the local authorities to be used for the cleaning and maintenance of drainage infrastructures, rivers and canals.

Preparedness is a key aspect of preventing risk becoming a hazard. My Ministry together with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre has a well-established plan to carry out sensitisation and awareness campaign among communities in flood prone areas through their active participation in the Community Disaster Response Programme (CDRP) which aims at training and equipping volunteers from vulnerable areas to respond in a crisis situation or imminent disaster. The programme has already been carried out in 14 regions, including Rodrigues and Agalega.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre is also providing necessary guidance to primary and secondary schools as well as care homes to develop their respective emergency response plans, including in situation of flooding.

Moreover, Contingency Plans for high risk flood areas have been prepared with the close collaboration of Municipal and District Councils to deal with heavy rainfall and flooding situations. These plans define the roles, responsibilities, and actions to be taken by relevant stakeholders before, during and after a heavy rainfall and flooding situation.

POINTE AUX SABLES - DRAINS, PAVEMENTS & ROADS

(No. B/735) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the project for the construction of drains, pavements and roads in the region of La Pointe, Pointe aux Sables, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to the –

- (a) scope of works of the contractor, Best Construct Ltd., and
- (b) contract value, indicating the start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the project referred to by the hon. Member is, in fact, the “Construction of drains at Avenue Crecerelle, Petit Verger, Pointe aux Sables” which is being implemented by the National Development Unit.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the scope of works for the project comprises the following –

- (i) construction of 955 metres of covered reinforced concrete drain of a width of 700 mm;
- (ii) construction of 100 metres of covered reinforced concrete drain of a width of 1,000 mm;
- (iii) provision of kerbs, slabs and gratings;
- (iv) relocation of underground CWA, Mauritius Telecom and CEB services along the alignment of the drain, and
- (v) reinstatement of the road along the drain edge.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the National Development Unit issued a works order on 27 November 2018 under the Framework Agreement for Construction and Upgrading of Drains and Associated Works 2018 to the contractor, Best Construct Co. Ltd for the execution of the works for an amount of Rs25,230,160.11, inclusive of VAT. The contractual start date and completion date were 04 February 2019 and 04 August 2019, respectively. Following variations in the works, value has been revised to Rs26,437,178.19, inclusive of VAT.

Completion of the project has been delayed due to additional works and confinement arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Works are expected to be completed by March 2021.

MAHEBOURG YOUTH CENTRE – RENOVATION

(No. B/736) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the renovation works of the Mahebourg Youth Centre, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The Mahebourg Youth Centre has undergone repairs and upgrading works. The works started on 01 September 2020 and have been completed.

ROAD DECONGESTION PROGRAMME - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/737) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

LA RUE COUVENT, CUREPIPE & DUBREUIL VILLAGE - SEWERAGE CONNECTION

(No. B/738) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage connection at La Rue Couvent and Dubreuil Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) that the region around La Rue Couvent, Curepipe is sewered up to its junction with Elias Coowar Street. Further down La Rue Couvent towards Wooton roundabout, the region is unsewered.

The inhabitants along some streets in the region of La Rue Couvent/Wooton have reported that they were facing recurrent nuisances due to onsite cesspits which were not functioning properly and which overflow, especially during heavy rainfall. After consultation with the Municipal Council of Curepipe, it has been agreed that the WMA would undertake a

Wastewater Project in two stages for the whole region of Wooton around La Rue Couvent, namely -

- i. Phase I will be implemented along Bhoyragee Lane and towards Gilbert Joson Street where most cases of overflow are located and will involve connection of some 27 houses to the sewer network, and
- ii. Phase II will cover the remaining region of Wooton and will be considered after completion of the Metro Express Project.

Tender for Phase I of the Wastewater Project has been launched by WMA on 08 October 2020 with closing date fixed for 09 November 2020. It is expected that the contract would be awarded by end of January 2021.

With regard to Dubreuil Village, I am further informed by the WMA that the region is partly sewered and the inhabitants, especially those located at the backside of Mahatma Gandhi and SSR streets, are facing recurrent nuisances due to the poor state of the common sewer reticulation network servicing them. The existing sewer network dates back more than 40 years and in many cases, the residents have constructed along the service corridors of their houses rendering intervention of operations and maintenance works of the WMA difficult.

With a view to having a permanent solution to the problem faced by inhabitants of Dubreuil, the WMA will embark on Wastewater Rehabilitation Works consisting of construction of about 660 m sewer line, upgrading of 123 m of existing main sewers and connection involving some 55 houses.

Tender for the project is scheduled to be launched by WMA in November 2020 and it is expected that works would start by March 2021.

CEB RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES - NGOS & CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

(No. B/739) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the CEB Renewable Energy Schemes for the Non-Governmental Organisations and the Charitable Institutions as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: The Budget Speech 2020-2021 has announced a series of measures to encourage adoption of renewable energy, including the CEB Renewable Energy Scheme.

This Scheme which was already applicable to Religious Bodies has been extended to NGOs and Charitable Institutions.

Under these Renewable Energy Schemes, beneficiaries receive a solar PV kit of either 2 kWp or 4 kWp, subject to a technical assessment, especially in respect of the roof space available on the sites. The total investment cost, including the operational and maintenance costs, are fully borne by CEB.

In return for their participation in the Schemes, beneficiaries receive the value corresponding to 50% of the electricity produced by the Solar PV Kit on a monthly basis over a period of 20 years.

I am informed that CEB has invited Expressions of Interest from NGOs and Charitable Institutions, following which 20 entities have indicated their interest to join the RE Scheme. Screening and verification exercises are currently being carried out by CEB and the interested NGOs and Charitable Institutions would be invited to complete the application process shortly. In parallel, the CEB is working on the procurement of the solar PV kits.

UPPER MARE AUX VACOAS SUPPLY ZONES - DEFECTIVE PIPES

(No. B/740) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the replacement of 37 kms of old and defective pipes in the Upper Mare aux Vacoas supply zones, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the regions which are mostly affected by the frequent burst and leakages thereof, and
- (b) when the pipes replacement project will be implemented.

Reply: The CWA has embarked on a Programme for the renewal of old and defective pipes over the last 5 years with a view to reducing water losses and enhancing the efficiency of the water distribution system.

Under this Programme, some 506 km of pipes have been replaced in several parts of the island.

Regarding part (a) of the question, in the upper Mare aux Vacoas System, the regions most affected by frequent burst due to old asbestos cements, galvanised pipes and encrusted pipes are Vacoas, Phoenix, Curepipe and St Pierre.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the CWA that in Upper Mare aux Vacoas water supply zone, 82 kms of old and defective pipelines were renewed under the Pipe Renewal Programme at a cost of Rs623.7 m. The project was completed in August 2016.

Moreover, the CWA also carries out replacement and renewal of old and defectives pipes island wide on a priority basis either under a Framework Agreement for Minor Works Contracts or under Capital Projects based on funds allocated for the purpose.

I have not been made aware of any project in regard to the replacement of 37 kms of old and defective pipes in Upper Mare aux Vacoas. However, CWA plans to undertake pipe replacement works for Upper Mare aux Vacoas regions under its Framework Agreement Contract.

I am further informed that the CWA is currently implementing the renewal of the existing pumping main (450 mm steel pipe) with a 600 mm diameter ductile iron pipe from La Marie Water Treatment Plant to La Brasserie Reservoir over a length of 6 kms.

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT PHASE 2 - CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/741) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the Metro Express Project Phase 2, he will state –

- (a) if a cultural impact assessment has been carried prior to the implementation thereof, and
- (b) if any structure of historical significance or unique architecture that may be impacted upon have been identified, indicating the measures that will be taken to preserve and integrate these structures into the project.

(Withdrawn)

MSAW - DOG - DYING STATE

(No. B/742) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the recent case of a dog found in a dying state within the compound of the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) as reported by one Mr R. C. at the Plaine Verte Police Station, he will state if an inquiry has been initiated thereinto by MSAW and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed that an inquiry has been initiated at the level of the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare and my Ministry is expecting a comprehensive report in two weeks' time.

COVID-19 SOLIDARITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/743) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House -

- (a) indicate the total amount collected therein as at date, and
- (b) table a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating the amount of funds disbursed therefrom in each case.

(Withdrawn)

HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES - FIRE CERTIFICATE

(No. B/744) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the health and safety measures, he will state if all hospitals, mediclinics, area health centres, warehouses and stores of the Ministry have a valid Fire Certificate.

(Withdrawn)

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILL – TESTING – SEABORNE ACTIVITIES

(No. B/745) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether in regard to the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spill, he will state –

- (a) the dates on which samples of sea water have been taken for testing, indicating the results thereof in each case, and
- (b) when fishing and other seaborne activities is expected to resume in the affected regions.

Reply: A partir du lendemain de l'échouement du MV Wakashio, c'est-à-dire le 26 juillet 2020, le National Environmental Laboratory (NEL) de mon ministère a effectué une surveillance quotidienne de l'eau de mer dans quatre sites, à savoir Blue Bay, Pointe d'Esny, Pointe Jérôme et Mahebourg Waterfront. Tous les résultats pour la période du 26 juillet au 5 août 2020 étaient conformes aux « *Guidelines for Coastal Water Quality* » du *Environment Protection Act 2002*.

À compter du 6 août 2020, soit le jour du *Oil spill* jusqu'au 13 août 2020, le nombre de sites surveillés quotidiennement est passé de quatre à seize le long de la côte de Blue Bay à la

région de Trou d'Eau Douce. Des concentrations élevées d'huile et de graisse et de Total Hydrocarbons ont été relevées à plusieurs endroits, notamment à Vieux Grand Port, Bois des Amourettes, Mahebourg, Rivière des Créoles et Falaise Rouge.

À partir du 14 août 2020, une surveillance côtière conjointe et quotidienne a été effectuée par NEL, l'*Albion Fisheries Research Centre* (AFRC) et le *Mauritius Oceanography Institute* (MOI) du Ministère de l'Economie bleue, des Ressources marines, de la Pêche et du Transport Maritime sur 27 sites notamment, Trou d'Eau Douce, Grande Rivière Sud Est, Quatre Soeurs, Deux Frères, Petit Sable, Grand Sable, Anse Jonchée, Bambous Virieux, Pointe du Diable, Pointe aux Feuilles, Pointe Canon, deux sites à Rivière des Créoles, Vieux Grand Port, Vieux Grand Port Debarcadère, Frederik Hendrik Museum, deux sites à Bois des Amourettes, La Case du Pêcheur (Barachois), La Cambuse, deux sites à Blue Bay, Pointe d'Esny, Pointe d'Esny Ramsar site, Pointe Jérôme, Mahebourg et Falaise Rouge. Les résultats ont été les suivants –

- (i) du 14 au 23 août 2020, les niveaux les plus élevés d'huile et de graisse ont été détectés à Mahebourg, dans la région de Rivière des Créoles, Falaise Rouge, dans la région de Vieux Grand Port, la région de Bois des Amourettes et Pointe du Diable alors que des concentrations d'huile et de graisse nettement inférieures à 100 mg/L ont été détectées sur les autres sites;
- (ii) par la suite, du 24 août au 10 septembre 2020, il y a eu une baisse significative des niveaux d'huile et de graisse sur les 27 sites, à l'exception de la région de Vieux Grand Port, la région de Bois des Amourettes, Pointe du Diable et la région de Rivière des Créoles.

Compte tenu de la diminution importante des quantités d'huile et de graisse à divers sites, la fréquence de la surveillance fut revue à trois fois par semaine pour la période du 11 septembre au 26 octobre 2020. Selon les résultats de la surveillance effectuée le 26 octobre 2020, deux des 27 sites, à savoir Pointe Jérôme et Blue Bay, ne correspondait pas avec les exigences du « *Guidelines for Coastal Water Quality* » du *Environment Protection Act 2002* pour les paramètres huile et graisse.

À compter du 27 octobre 2020, le nombre de sites côtiers faisant l'objet d'un suivi a été revu à 17 sites à une fréquence de deux fois par semaine. Selon les derniers essais effectués le

03 novembre 2020, trois sites dont la région de Blue Bay, Pointe Jerome et La Cambuse ne correspondait pas aux exigences du « *Guidelines for Coastal Water Quality* » du *Environment Protection Act 2002* pour les paramètres huile et graisse.

En ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, une décision pour la réouverture des sites sera prise par le gouvernement, compte tenu de l'état des opérations de nettoyage sur les sites affectés et des derniers résultats de la surveillance environnementale.

HOTELS - QUARANTINE CENTRES

(No. B/746) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the hotels which have been converted into Quarantine Centres, following the re-opening of our borders on 01 October 2020, he will state –

- (a) the number and names thereof;
- (b) the mode and criteria used for the selection thereof;
- (c) the hotels which are also opened to members of the public, and
- (d) if Government is paying any additional fee to the hotels over and above the quarantine fee charged and if so, whether a contract has been signed in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

FRONT LINERS - RS15,000 ALLOWANCE

(No. B/747) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the proposed payment of an allowance of Rs15,000 to the front liners who were mobilised during the lockdown period as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state –

- (a) if the payment thereof has already been effected;
- (b) the criteria for selection of the beneficiaries, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the payment thereof to other front liners.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIAN NATIONALS - REPATRIATION

(No. B/748) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the repatriation of Mauritian nationals, he will state the –

- (a) amount of money claimed therefrom as quarantine charges, and
- (b) number of Mauritians –
 - (i) still stranded abroad, and
 - (ii) unable to return to the country due to the quarantine fees charged.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL REGISTER OF MAURITIUS - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/749) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the household registered under the Social Register of Mauritius as at to date, she will state the number of applications dealt with on a monthly basis since January 2020 to date.

Reply: I am informed that a total of 1,930 applications for registration under the Social Register of Mauritius have been received since January 2020 to date, as detailed below

–

SN	Month (Year 2020)	Number of applications by month
1.	January	178
2.	February	232
3.	March	259
4.	June	257
5.	July - October	1,004

Total	1,930
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**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS – COVID-19 LOCKDOWN -
FRONTLINERS - ALLOWANCE**

(No. B/750) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the proposed payment of an allowance of Rs15,000 to the frontliners of his Ministry who were mobilised during the lockdown period as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state if payment has already been effected thereto and, if not, why not.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that payment of an allowance of Rs15,000 totalling to an amount of Rs163.8 m. has already been effected to 10,920 staff of my Ministry in August 2020.

Furthermore, an additional list of 2,246 staff for outstanding payment of allowances has been received from September from our hospitals along with claims from 319 staff of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care and 92 staff from other Ministries whose services were required during the confinement period have also been received.

Additional funds for payment of allowances to the remaining 2,657 staff are being sought from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and payment would be effected in due course.

MSAW - STRAY DOGS - CATCHING EXERCISE

(No. B/751) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to stray dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to the urgent measures to be taken to address the presence thereof on public roads, beaches and hospitals' premises, indicating if consideration will be given for the catching exercises thereof to be carried out at night in the hospitals.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) that it has a pre-scheduled plan for dog catching throughout the island which aims essentially at reducing the number of stray dogs on public roads, beaches and hospitals' premises.

I am further informed that the MSAW also attends to requests made by different authorities and the public at large. These complaints are attended to within three days depending on the urgency of the issue.

For the month of October 2020, the MSAW has caught some 411 stray dogs throughout the island.

The MSAW also works with the Beach Authority to address the issue of stray dogs on our beaches. Since 2018, about 200 stray dogs have been caught on public beaches. As regards hospitals' premises, the MSAW has an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the control of dogs and cats with visits being carried out twice weekly in the main hospitals. The catching exercises are already being carried out at night. Since 2018, about 975 dogs and cats have been caught in health institutions around Mauritius.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 16 - METRO EXPRESS NETWORK

(No. B/752) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the work in progress of Phase 2 of the Metro Express network in Constituency No. 16, Vacoas and Floréal, he will state the number of –

- (a) households affected with the installation of the tramway, and
- (b) compulsory acquisitions effected as at to date, indicating the amount of compensation paid in each case.

(Withdrawn)

HOTELS - QUARANTINE FACILITIES

(No. B/753) Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the hotels which have been converted into Quarantine Centres, following the re-opening of our borders on 01 October 2020, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof, indicating the names and duration thereof, and

(b) if all health and quarantine protocols are being followed thereat.

Reply (The Deputy Prime Minister): I shall reply to Parliamentary Question B/753, which was initially addressed to the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

I have already replied to part (a) of the question in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/746.

These hotels will be used as quarantine facilities as long as they are needed.

As for part (b) of the question, as far as I am aware, each quarantine facility is under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The integrity of the premises is ensured by the Police. Moreover, I am informed that there is a regular monitoring of the quarantine facilities to ascertain that all the procedures are being strictly adhered to.

CUREPIPE - DRAIN PROJECTS

(No. B/754) Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to drain projects in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to –

- (a) the list of flood prone regions, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council of Curepipe that there are 22 flood prone areas which have been identified by the Land Drainage Authority in the town of Curepipe, namely –

1. NHDC Atlee/Jasmin
2. Convent Street - near school
3. Cité St Luc
4. Pope Hennessy
5. Gold Crest
6. Morcellement Piat - Forest Side
7. Abbé Laval
8. Rivière Sèche

9. Cite Atlee - near Mémoire
10. Cité Joachim
11. Morcellement Rochecouste
12. Frédérick Bonnefin - Forest Side
13. Cité Malherbes
14. Engrais Cathan, Eau Coulée/Camp Le Vieux
15. Rue Lees/Anderson/Higginson/Willoughby
16. Quatre Carreaux
17. Lapeyrouse near Charles Regnaud
18. Floréal - Pierre Simonet Street
19. Curepipe - Thommy d'Arifat Street
20. Ramhit Lane - La Mairée
21. Curepipe - Patisserie Suisse
22. Robinson

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that regular cleaning of bushy land bordering sites and drains are performed by the Council.

With respect to the region of NHDC Atlee/Jasmin, an open drain has already been constructed to channel water into the existing drain network.

I am also informed that drain projects at Anderson Street and River Lane, Robinson have been included under NEF funded projects 2020/2021 to be implemented by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, whereas the drain projects at Ramhit Lane, La Mairée; Engrais Cathan, Eau-Coulée and at Lees Street will be undertaken by the National Development Unit in this financial year.

EXTENDED PROGRAMME - STUDY

(No. B/755) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Extended Programme, she will state if any study has been carried out by the World Bank thereon, indicating –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if she proposes to table a copy thereof.

(Withdrawn)

FORTIFIED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT UNIT - TUTORS

(No. B/756) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the tutors for the Fortified Learning Environment Unit, she will state the authority responsible for the training and recruitment thereof, indicating the –

- (a) sum allocated thereto;
- (b) eligibility criteria for the recruitment thereof, and
- (c) number thereof recruited.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION - EXTENDED PROGRAMME - STUDENTS

(No. B/757) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the National Certificate of Education, she will state if students from the Extended Programme will have the opportunity to resit or otherwise study for one additional year in the event they do not achieve the required level at the first attempt.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 20 - ALBION - DRAINS

(No. B/758) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to Splendid View in Albion, in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin Petite Rivière, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of drains thereat before the next rainy season.

(Withdrawn)

SECURITY SERVICES CONTRACTS - PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTOR

(No. A/51) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Security Services contracts entered into by the Ministries, including parastatal bodies and Government owned companies, he will table a list thereof as at to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) procurement mode thereof;
- (b) date on which the contract was awarded;
- (c) name of the contractor;
- (d) duration, and
- (e) contract value thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member, relating to ongoing contracts, is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATION SERVICES CONTRACTS - PROCUREMENT

(No. A/52) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Public Relations and Communication Services contracts entered into by Ministries, including parastatal bodies and Government owned companies, he will table a list thereof as at to date, indicating in each case the -

- (a) procurement mode thereof;
- (b) date on which the contract was awarded;
- (c) name of the contractor;
- (d) duration, and
- (e) contract value thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member, relating to ongoing contracts, is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - REPORTED CASES - 2019 TO 03 NOVEMBER 2020

(No. A/53) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to

offences of domestic violence as provided for under section 3(a)(d) of the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2016, she will state the number of –

- (a) reported cases thereof from 2019 to date;
- (b) prosecutions initiated, and
- (c) convictions secured.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that from information gathered from the Police Department, 4,897 cases of Domestic Violence as provided for under section 3(a) (d) of the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2016 have been reported, following which, 1,541 accused have been arrested, prosecuted and sentenced.