



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTION

BILL (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail
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
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Commerce and Consumer

	Protection
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 33 of 2020

Sitting of Tuesday 10 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)

ANNOUNCEMENT**MR JAIRAJ SONOO, CSK - CHAIRMAN - STATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD - COMPLAINT**

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, before we proceed with the business of the House, I have an announcement to make.

I have received a written complaint from Mr Jairaj Sonoo, CSK, Chairman of the State Investment Corporation Ltd, on Friday 06 November. Mr Sonoo's complaint is in regard to the proceedings of Tuesday 03 November when, during Question time, the hon. Xavier Luc Duval, in addressing a supplementary question to his main Question B/694, whilst clearly identifying Mr Sonoo by name made some unfounded allegations against the latter.

I have perused the Hansard which reveals that, in fact, reference has been made to Mr Sonoo, and I quote -

“Can I also ask whether there is one Mr Sonoo who was dismissed from the SBM under dubious circumstances? Whether this Mr Sonoo is not Head of the Investment Committee and he is the person who is deciding as to where our Rs80 billion is going?”

End of quote.

Mr Sonoo claims that the words uttered by the hon. Duval, made in his absence, are most unfair and damaging to his character.

Mr Sonoo has further complained that the said averments which were broadcast live have gone viral on the social media. Mr Sonoo is now seeking the intervention of the Chair for redress.

Mr Sonoo contends that he has had a long and untarnished career in the banking sector for over 40 years during which he has held several positions of responsibility both locally and internationally. Mr Sonoo has stated that he was neither dismissed from the SBM nor is he the Head of Investment Committee.

I consider that the statement of the hon. Duval may cause irreparable prejudice to him and attempt to his credibility and reputation both locally and internationally.

Hon. Members, in the matter at hand I am, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by Standing Order 77, ordering that all references made to Mr Sonoo be expunged from the Hansard and the video footage of the proceedings.

I am tabling a copy of the letter.

I thank you.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance

The Annual Report 2019 of the Integrity Reporting Services Agency.

B. Ministry of Arts and Culture

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the year ended 31 December 2015.

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 on a question in respect of unlawfully making cash payment which is tantamount to a crime, to an offence, and this offence ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Put your question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: ... and this offence, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is Question Time, PNQ, you put your question! There is no comment! I am on my feet! No comment; put your question!

Dr. Boolell: I have not consented to the question that is before us. The question that I have put this morning relates to money laundering, an offence ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, if you have any information about such thing, you go to other quarters; this is not concerned by Parliament; No. 1. No. 2 ...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: I will table the cash payment.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet and I am giving my ruling! Respect, have decorum for the House!

The hon. Leader of the Opposition had been informed of the amendments brought to the PNQ and explained the principles thereof by the Clerk. He did come to my Office as Standing Order 21 allows him to do in case he wishes to make representations in relation thereto. But, unfortunately, he misbehaved and left my Office. Since then, this Office has been waiting for him to give his views on the amended PNQ. Finally, inasmuch as same was not forthcoming and neither did he withdraw the PNQ, this Office had to release the amended PNQ to allow the holding of the present Sitting as convened.

Leader of the Opposition, without any comment, go into your question!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, you have amended the question that I have put, and it relates to money laundering!

Mr Speaker: I have the right!

Dr. Boolell: An offence of 10-year prison!

Mr Speaker: The Clerk has the right to subedit; I have the right to finalise. You were called to my Office and if you disagree, you have other platforms; choose your platforms. For now, you will have the floor to put your question. Start!

Dr. Boolell: I cannot put a question which is yours. I have to put question to which I have consented to, and I can give you information in respect of ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, this is the last chance. Either you have a question, you withdraw the question or simply leave the floor.

Dr. Boolell: You want me to put question? Alright, I will put the question. Can the Prime Minister inform the House whether Rs4 m. of funds ...?

Mr Speaker: No, this is not your question!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, this is not your question!

Dr. Boolell: But I cannot put a question which is not mine.

Mr Speaker: This is not your question ...

Dr. Boolell: I cannot put a question which is not mine, a question which has been reformulated, distorted. My question relates to money laundering.

Mr Speaker: This is my last warning ...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: My question relates to cash payment, which I have here!

Mr Speaker: This is the last warning I am giving you!

(Interruptions)

No tabling! There is no tabling. This is the last warning!

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition, you are obstructing the proceedings of the House and I have no other choice than asking you to leave the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

Leave the Chamber, please, and I suspend the Sitting.

At 11.50 a.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.00 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please, be seated! Prime Minister's Question Time! Hon. Osman Mahomed!

MOTOR VEHICLES – LARCENY

(No. B/759) 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 reported cases of larceny of motor vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, on a monthly basis, since January 2020 to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/759 and B/769 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2020 to date, 310 cases of larceny of motor vehicles have been reported island-wide, and 79 have been recovered during that same period. I am tabling a monthly breakdown of the number of the cases.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards PQ B/769, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the mushrooming of office buildings in Ebene has led to more persons commuting thereat and most of them are using their own vehicles. Due to limited parking spaces, they are at times inclined to park their vehicles in available public spaces or roadsides which are remote from their workplaces and which are not under CCTV surveillance. Miscreants are thus taking advantage of this situation to commit larceny of motor vehicles.

For the period January 2020 to date, five cases of larceny of motor vehicles in Ebene have been reported to the Police. All the five cases are under Police investigation.

However, on 19 October 2020, at around 14.00 hours, whilst patrolling along Rue de L'Institut, Ebene, a special team, comprising the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Field Intelligence Unit (FIU), Divisional Support Unit (DSU), Emergency Response Service (ERS) and Regular Police, which has been set up to police the area of the Cybercity and its surroundings, came across one Mr A. S. M. S. A. who was caught red-handed committing a larceny from a private car by breaking the nearside triangular window. He was arrested and he confessed the crime. He appeared before Rose Hill Court on the next day on a provisional charge for '*Larceny from Car*' and was remanded to Police cell as the Police objected to his release on bail. The enquiry is ongoing.

The measures taken by the Police to avoid recurrence of larceny of motor vehicles in Ebene are as follows –

- (a) on 30 October 2018, a Police Post manned by 11 Police Officers has been set up at the Utility Building;
- (b) the Police are working in collaboration with stakeholders operating thereat with a view to coming up with concrete solutions to address the problem of larceny of vehicles such as construction of more paid parking zones;
- (c) persons commuting to Ebene are advised to –
 - (i) use common means of transport to avoid parking problems;
 - (ii) refrain from parking vehicles at remote places which are not covered by CCTV cameras;
 - (iii) make maximum use of Paid Parking zone facilities, and
 - (iv) enhance the security of their vehicles by using additional convenient locks and alarm system.
- (d) additionally, company managers are advised to employ private security agencies and to install CCTV cameras;
- (e) intensive patrols and aggressive stop and search operations are being maintained by regular Police, CID, DSU and ERS, and
- (f) patrols by Police Officers in civilian clothes and undercover operation by Field Intelligence Officers are carried out to track down offenders of larceny of vehicles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from the measures taken in Ebene, the following preventive measures are taken by the Police to prevent the occurrence of larceny island-wide –

- (i) the establishment of Community Policing Forums with the community, whereby the public informs the Police about suspicious persons and activities to prevent any crime;
- (ii) the different adjuncts of the Police, including the Crime Prevention Unit and the Road Safety Unit, continuously sensitise the community on the safety and security measures to be taken for their protection and safety.
- (iii) every year, the Police Force organises specific Police Security and Safety weeks to demonstrate to the public safety measures that they can take. These include a special stand on “Car Security” where security measures such as

alarm, GPS car finder, car central lock, security gadgets are exhibited and explained by an Officer and Leaflets on these measures are distributed to all visitors;

- (iv) all notorious characters, including habitual criminals, persons lately released from jail, particularly those who have the propensity to commit larceny with violence, larceny of vehicles or larceny from vehicles are systematically monitored and discretely checked, and
- (v) persons suspected to be involved or likely to be involved in criminal activities are being continuously profiled by Crime Field Intelligence Officers. On receiving adequate information about the likelihood of an offence to be committed, CID Officers are informed and targeted operations are launched against those persons.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. In his original statement, the hon. Prime Minister has made mention that since the beginning of the year, 310 cases of larceny have occurred, among which 79 have been recovered, which means to say that 231 vehicles have not been found. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has had the chance to discuss with the Commissioner of Police about this very high figure, which is about 21 cars per month are being lost, without them being found, abnormally high for a small island like Mauritius which is now covered with almost 4,000 cameras of the Safe City Project? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has had the chance to discuss with the Commissioner of Police about this phenomenon?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course, but there is no need for me to discuss about this issue with the Police which is always assuming its responsibility to tract criminals and, in this case, those who have committed larceny of motor vehicles, and I can say that the enquiry is ongoing in those cases. They did happen in 2020. If I have to recall, I have figures about how many cases of larceny of vehicles there were from 2000 to 2014. You are saying that the number is exorbitantly high; if I can understand what you said. Let me say that in 2003 there were 978 cases of larceny of vehicles; in 2004: 1,097; in 2005: 981; in 2006: 992; in 2007: 962. So, I can keep on giving the figures because statistics will show that the number is not abnormally high. But that does not mean to say that we need to condone such acts of larceny

of motor vehicles. Of course, Police will endeavour its best to try to track those criminals and to bring them before justice.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Prime Minister in a position to say whether the trend of larceny of motor vehicles has been on the increase and whether the use of Safe City Camera has helped to catch the offenders?

The Prime Minister: Whether it has been on the increase? I cannot say that it has been on the increase. It has been decreasing and then it has been increasing, depending on the year. On a year to year basis, there have been decreases, there have been increases also. But I must also say that the CCTV cameras and the Safe City Project have been helpful to the Police to resolve a number of cases. In fact, nine of those cases leading to recoveries were detected by CCTV whilst the remaining have been detected, for example, by means of information and investigation.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: The hon. Prime Minister seems to be defending the record of the Police as far as those 231 vehicles that are still not present. Now, can he consider the possibility of addressing with the Commissioner of Police that there must be some sort of traffick going on since his Government has given so many friends of his permit for metal foundries and that there is, therefore, the strict possibility of those friends of Government delivered with permits, having those cars melted for profit?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not defending the performance of the Police. To the question that was put by hon. Osman Mahomed, I replied that this figure is not abnormally high as compared to that of previous years. In fact, when we look at those years from 2000 to 2014, there were high numbers of larceny of motor vehicles, and we must bear in mind also how many vehicles, when compared to now, were on the road at that time. So, compare! Yes, I heard you saying compare like with like; then, compare like with like and then you will see. But that does not mean to say that I am happy with the fact that there is a number of cases which are not resolved. But, again, let me highlight that we are talking about larceny of vehicles for the year 2020. So, whenever there is a reported case in one year, you do not expect the alleged criminals to have acted in that very same year. So, it depends. It is with time that Police carries out its investigation. What is important to me is that,

ultimately, those suspects are caught. As I mentioned, in one case somebody was caught red-handed, and the enquiry is now ongoing to establish a case of larceny of motor vehicle.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. I was just looking at statistics. The trend is on the rise; Central Statistics Office figures. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, since the question of Ebene has not been put to my friend, hon. Nagalingum, I will ask it for him. In the region of Ebene, can the hon. Prime Minister discuss with the Commissioner of Police, being given that there is no Police Station in that particular zone and it is found in Rose Hill, that more patrol be conducted? Because a lot of cars are being lost there, if I go by Press reports over the last few weeks. Thank you.

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member had listened carefully to my answer, I did mention that on 30 October 2018, a Police Post that is manned by 11 Police Officers has been set up at the Utility Building in Ebene.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nagalingum, since your question has been replied!

Mr Nagalingum: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, specifically for the Ebene region where there are many reported cases of car larceny and the fact that the Landscape Car Parking is not fully utilised, is very expensive, whether he will impress on Landscape to review downwards the rental fees?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this Parking Tower Project is a private enterprise project. True it is that there are institutions wherein Government has a stakeholding. I will inform, of course, them that there is representation that the parking is probably not that cheap. I shall pass on the message of the hon. Member. But it is a question of profitability, of the amount that has been invested and how much will have to be recouped, provided, of course, that it is not too expensive. I shall pass on that request to those concerned.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table had been advised that PQ B/767 has been withdrawn and that PQ B/774 will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

Next question, hon. Juman!

MINOR N. M. R. A - KIDNAPPING & SEXUAL ASSAULT

(No. B/760) 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 the CID at 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.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Saturday 10 October 2020, at 19.01 hours, the parents of minor N.M.R.A. aged 8 years and residing at Mapou Road, Pamplemousses accompanied the latter to Pamplemousses Police Station to report a case of ‘causing harm to a child’. The case was attended by a Woman Police Sergeant. The victim appeared to be in a state of shock.

As the two vehicles allocated to the Pamplemousses Police Station were already engaged on other official duties and upon the request of the family, a private car belonging to a relative of the victim was used to convey the minor to SSRN Hospital for medical examination. The victim was accompanied by his mother and one Woman Police Sergeant. At the Hospital, he was examined by a Medical Health Officer, in the presence of a Child Psychologist and two Welfare Officers of the Child Development Unit. Minor N.M.R.A. was thereafter allowed to proceed to his residence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on Sunday 11 October 2020, at 00.13 hrs, following investigation, one Mr A.S.D. was arrested. He refused to give his statement, informing that he would do so in the presence of his lawyer at a later stage. He was provisionally charged with ‘causing harm to a child’ before the District Court of Pamplemousses on Monday 12 October 2020. Police objected to his release on bail and he was remanded to Police cell.

On 23 October 2020, Mr A.S.D., after having been informed of his Constitutional rights, gave his statement to the Police. He was released on bail on Monday 26 October 2020, after furnishing a surety of Rs12,000 and entering into a recognizance of Rs100,000. He was also ordered by the District Magistrate to report to Pamplemousses Police Station on the 20th of each month between 06.00 hrs and 18.00 hrs, and the enquiry is ongoing.

Mr Juman: Thank you. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House how many Police vehicles are attached to Pamplemousses Police Station and how many of them were in working order on that date?

The Prime Minister: From information that I have, there are two Police vans and both of them were in working order.

Mr Juman: M. le Premier ministre, qui est aussi ministre de la Défense, ministre de l'Intérieur, également responsable de la Force policière, peut-il nous dire si c'est une pratique courante pour la police de renvoyer une victime, dans ce cas précis, un enfant de 8 ans qui a été kidnappé, séquestré et abusé à la maison, au lieu de l'emmener à l'hôpital, en raison d'un manque de transport et de les rappeler plus tard au poste de police pour faire la requête s'il peut conduire l'officier de police et la victime à l'hôpital. Et pour plus tard...

Mr Speaker: Non, mais...

Mr Juman: Ecoutez. J'ai déjà posé ma question. Laissez-moi terminer!

Mr Speaker: Put your question! What is your question? I want to listen to your question!

Mr Juman: J'ai demandé si c'est une pratique courante. Laissez-moi terminer.

Mr Speaker: There is no *laissez terminer*!

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker, let me finish, please!

Mr Speaker: Put your question...

Mr Juman: I am putting my question!

Mr Speaker:... hon. Member!

Mr Juman: I am putting my question! Just let me finish!

Mr Speaker: You already put your question?

Mr Juman: I'm not.

Mr Speaker: You've taken so much time. Now, only one minute to put your question.

Mr Juman: I will take the time that it needs.

Mr Speaker: No!

Mr Juman: I will take the time that it needs.

Mr Speaker: No, I regulate Parliament. I am ordering you. I am ruling. You put your question; I give you one minute.

Mr Juman: De le rappeler plus tard; cette fois-ci, c'est l'officier de la Brigade des Mineurs qui demande...

Mr Speaker: No, I don't allow! Put your supplementary question!

Mr Juman: *Ecoutez do! Ecoutez!*

Mr Speaker: I don't! You are challenging the authority of the Chair and you are doing harm to yourself. Please!

Mr Juman: Let me finish!

Mr Speaker: You want to put a question; I give you a last chance.

Mr Juman: I don't know why it's harming you that much. *Au lieu d'aller à l'hôpital par le transport de la police, on leur demande de véhiculer l'officier de la Brigade des Mineurs. M. le Premier ministre, est-ce que c'est une pratique...*

Mr Speaker: Now, you're going to a statement. Okay! I disallow this question!

Mr Juman: I am asking the Prime Minister. I'm asking.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

NATIONAL YOUTH ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL – SETTING UP

(No. B/761) **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 proposed setting up of a National Youth Environment Council as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024, he will state when same will be implemented, indicating the –

- (a) purpose thereof, and
- (b) criteria laid down for the selection of the members thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024, the National Youth Environment Council has been set up under the aegis of my Office, and the Council is presently being constituted.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the purpose of the Council is to give an opportunity to the youth to contribute in the decision making process on matters relating to the protection of the environment. The Council will give the youth a platform to engage with policy makers through me on matters related to sustainability, policy agendas and climate resilience.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, the National Youth Environment Council will consist of 14 members, aged between 18 to 35, and having a keen interest in the protection of the environment. The Council will comprise of –

- (i) a Chairperson;
- (ii) a Vice-Chairperson;
- (iii) a representative of the Prime Minister's Office;
- (iv) a representative of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change;
- (v) a representative of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation;
- (vi) a person with legal background;
- (vii) a person with social background;
- (viii) a representative of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, and
- (ix) a person representing the Trade Union.

The Council will also consist of five representatives from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in diverse fields of expertise such as marine sciences, biodiversity, climate change, sustainable agriculture and education and heritage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to have the right persons to represent the NGOs on the Council, a call for application has been published in the Press last week for the registered NGOs in the specific fields to submit nominations of candidates within the specified age group and the closing date is 20 November 2020. The NGOs are also required to submit a testimonial regarding the suitability of the nominated candidate, who should submit his/her CV, together with a motivation letter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all the members of the Council will be appointed by me and will hold office for two years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, once the representatives of the NGOs are selected, the National Youth Environment Council will be constituted and will start operating.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Merci. J'ai pu effectivement constater que suite à ma question, un communiqué de presse a été émis. As per the latter, public institutions...*

(Interruptions)

Yes, yes, yes!

Mr Speaker: Order!

Ms Bérenger: *Le 5 novembre, le communiqué a été émis. Ma question a été envoyée depuis une semaine.* As per the latter, public institutions,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Ms J. Bérenger: ...will be represented. Can we know which public institutions will be represented and who will take the decisions, please?

The Prime Minister: I have answered. I said that there are going to be a representative of the Prime Minister's Office, a representative of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, a representative of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation. Those are the public institutions, and I have given the list for the others also.

Ms J. Bérenger: Who will take the decisions?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

The Prime Minister: Who? Decision for?

Mr Speaker: No, this is not a kind of question here.

Ms J. Bérenger: Who will take the decisions?

Mr Speaker: You should go through the Chair, hon. Member. Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister advise whether there will be the opportunity for the views of students below the age of 18 to be taken onboard?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, that was an issue that was discussed lengthily whenever we decided to limit the age to 18. But I can assure the hon. Member that the Council will be able to interact, for example, with students and people of other age groups also, of different sectors in order to get their views and suggestions, and then, obviously, they will formulate their recommendations on environmental matters.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister give us more information about the mandate of the National Youth Environment Council?

The Prime Minister: The mandate is to advise and contribute to the national objectives and goals and identify national policies and priorities in regard to the environment; to make recommendations on national Action Plans or other environment policies or reports; to assist in the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals into national policies, plans and strategies; to identify national policies, agendas and legislation that need to be reviewed; to ensure increased sustainability and climate resilience; to submit policy papers on environment protection and related issues to the Prime Minister; participation in and hold awareness campaigns and/or initiate immediate response teams to act in case of urgent or potentially urgent environmental crisis requiring immediate actions, and to represent the youth on various fora related to the environment and the SDGs.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms Bérenger: Thank you. The Climate Change Bill which is actually being discussed is silent on the contribution of the National Youth Environment Council. The future of our youth is at stake and they cannot be there only for the window dressing. What can the hon. Prime Minister say to the youth to guarantee that their voice will be heard and that their proposals will be taken into consideration?

The Prime Minister: That is the very purpose of setting up the National Youth Environment Council, which is particularly and specifically to enable the views of the youth to be heard.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/767 has been withdrawn. Next question!

(Interruptions)

I apologise, this is a handwriting problem. It is PQ B/762. So, we move to the next question, B/763!

SBM - MR R. D. - FORMER CEO - ALLEGED FRAUD - INQUIRY

(No. B/762) 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 Mr R. D., former Chief Executive Officer of the State Bank of Mauritius (SBM), he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been initiated against him in relation to an alleged case of fraud at the SBM and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE FORCE - INSPECTOR OF POLICE & ABOVE -VACANCIES

(No. B/763) 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 grades of Inspector of Police and above, both male and female, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of existing vacancies in each case, indicating when same will be filled.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to Parliamentary Question B/138, the House was informed about the number of vacancies as at 26 June 2020 in the grades of Inspector of Police and above for both male and female. I also informed that recruitment in the public service is being limited to priority sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impact on public finances.

In the context of the budgetary exercise for Financial Year 2020/21, it was announced that a Committee would be set up under the Chair of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to make recommendations on the filling of essential vacancies in Ministries and Departments for Financial Year 2020/21. A sum of around Rs300 m. has thus been allocated for that purpose for the whole Civil Service.

A circular was issued by my Office in June 2020 to request Supervising Officers of Ministries and Departments to submit their proposals for the filling of vacancies in Financial Year 2020/21 to the Committee in accordance with the following guiding principles –

- (i) the post to be filled should be of national interest and an absolute necessity for the achievements of the strategic objectives of Ministries and Departments;
- (ii) the post requested should be directly related to the implementation of Budget measures and/or Government Programme;
- (iii) the post is required to fulfil Government's commitment at regional and international levels;

- (iv) whether a promotional post is essential for the smooth functioning of key Sections or Divisions of Ministries and Departments, and
- (v) whether any post to be filled at operational level is crucial to ensure continuity in public service delivery.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at 05 November 2020, there are 119 vacancies in the grades of Inspector of Police and above, for both male and female. Funds are available for the filling of 10 posts during the current financial year.

Mr Speaker: Time over by four minutes!

Question addressed to hon. Ministers! First of all, hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/793 will be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

PQ B/794 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste, Management and Climate Change.

PQ B/814 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail.

PQ B/823 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development.

PQ B/824 will be replied by the hon. Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

PQ B/813 has been withdrawn. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

COVID-19 - AIR MAURITIUS CABIN CREW - PROTOCOL

(No. B/771) 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 if he is aware of any recent case of breach of self-isolation protocol by the member/s of the cabin crew of Air Mauritius Ltd., and, if so, state if consideration will be given to review the existing protocol with a view to enhancing the protection of the population against the risks of contamination therefrom.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission PQ B/771 and B/786 would be answered simultaneously being given that they pertain to the same subject matter.

Following the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, Government decided to close its borders as from Tuesday 19 March 2020. However, given the number of Mauritian nationals stranded overseas, inbound flights already scheduled were operated.

I am informed that pending the resumption of passenger flights, cargo flights run by Air Mauritius were maintained and operated and as and when required. My Ministry devised a protocol for all crew members servicing such flights whereby the wearing of full PPE was mandatory and the flight personnel stayed onboard the aircraft itself during the stopover in the foreign country.

Upon arrival in Mauritius, Air Mauritius personnel who serviced the flights had to self-isolate for a period of seven days. Repatriation flights for Mauritian nationals stranded abroad resumed on 1st June 2020. The protocol for cabin crew servicing the flights stipulated that all the flight personnel had to be equipped with full protective clothing during the flight until their arrival in their respective hotel rooms in the foreign country where they stayed confined until the return trip.

I am further informed that on the return trip the same stringent sanitary protocol applied to all inflight personnel who again had to observe a mandatory self-isolation period of seven days in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the information obtained on social media and concerns expressed by the Air Mauritius Cabin Crew Association, the protocol for Air Mauritius Cabin Crew was reviewed by my Ministry. It was convened that staff from my Ministry would call to the respective residences for all crew members having serviced international flights on the seventh day of their self-isolation period for a PCR test. They are allowed to resume to normal activities upon receiving a negative result.

I am also informed that a crew member returning from an international flight might be called to service another flight during his 7-day self-isolation period due to exigencies of service. They are, however, not eligible to service flights connecting Rodrigues.

I wish to inform the House that various protocols have been drafted concerning cabin crew members of Air Mauritius, among others, a protocol for cabin crew members on international flights, one for cabin crew members on flights from Rodrigues and another one for cabin crew members on cargo flights who are required to remain on board the aircraft at the stopover.

On 31 October 2020, my Ministry took cognizance of a case reported by a family member on social media to the effect that a cabin crew had breached the self-isolation protocol upon his return from an international flight. It was reported that the concerned cabin crew accompanied his two children to school while he was supposed to self-isolate and he

also went to Flacq Hospital for hearing problems, once more in breach of the 7 days home isolation period.

The matter was viewed with concern by my Ministry and upon his return flight from another international flight on 01 November 2020, he was placed in a hotel for quarantine purposes. A PCR test was done and the result was negative.

I am further informed that a thorough enquiry was conducted and the crew member admitted to have been in breach of established protocol. A PCR test carried out on his D7 turned out to be negative. He was discharged and handed over to Police on 08 November 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the House of the fact that our protocols are subject to constant updates based on the latest scientific information available. Our established protocols, which have been adhered to, ever since the resumption of the repatriation flights to Mauritius, have given the expected results and thanks to these stringent measures, no case of contamination among Air Mauritius staff have occurred since then.

I also wish to remind the House that all passengers travelling to Mauritius have the obligation to produce a negative PCR test result for COVID-19 before being allowed to board the flight and this constitutes an additional measure of safety for the crew members.

I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to all staff of Air Mauritius, particularly to those servicing the flights in this difficult time. Crew members of Air Mauritius are, in fact, at the forefront of the fight against this pandemic. My Ministry fully recognises their valuable contribution.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: *In the information letter of the cabin crew operation of Air Mauritius du 26 octobre est mentionné que le ministère de la Santé a fait état que plusieurs membres d'équipage avaient enfreint le protocole d'auto-isolement et étaient injoignables à leur lieu de résidence. Peut-on savoir de combien de membres d'équipage s'agit-t-il et les sanctions qu'ils ont perçues suite à leurs infractions aux exigences de la quarantaine?*

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever we have to do the PCR test on a passenger or the crew member on the seventh day, we have to contact them on phone. It is obvious that whenever we do not receive them on phone, we inform the authorities of Air Mauritius, and the authorities, have the obligation to inform the crew member that we have to do the PCR test. This is being done within a two hours' delay. So, our requirement is that a team has

already left to reach the residence of the crew member. Obviously, what we require is that this crew member has to facilitate our work and that has been done and has been adhered to.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Richard Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can the hon. Minister tell the House why is it that the cabin crew and pilots are sharing the same bus as other airlines when they are in Paris where social distancing has never been respected?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, cabin crew and pilots, they can share the same bus. We do not need to have social distancing at this moment because they have taken all the precautions. The crew work with full PPE and if there is no mistake on their part, they cannot be contaminated. If they keep their PPE till they reach their hotel, we cannot make any difference between the crew members and the pilots.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned about isolation only once a week, officers of his Ministry go and do the PCR test. Doesn't he agree that it is necessary for spot checks to be carried out to ensure that the people, who are on self-isolation, are actually in their house or they can be called on the phone or there must be a measure of control to ensure self-isolation, means self-isolation?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. Mr Speaker Sir, the Ministry has considered to do spot checks especially when, lately, we had information that there might be air crew members moving around. So, these spot checks are being carried out; one is through the phone on a daily basis, that is, calling the members and, at the same time, informing the family members also that it is very important for them to observe the isolation. And wherever needed, spots checks are being carried out before doing the PCR test.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. From the reply of the Minister, I took note that a derogation has been made to cabin crew staff. Can the Minister inform the House as to why there has been this derogation for Air Mauritius crew to undergo only seven days quarantine period as compared to the normal fourteen days quarantine period? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, so the seven days protocol quarantine period instead of the mandatory fourteen days quarantine, as I have just said, crew members work in full PPE so they take all the precautions. Obviously, whenever they return from the plane to the

hotel, they keep on using the full PPE. With all the precautions, they are taking and the tests that we are doing, quarantine period for seven days is normal.

Mr Speaker: There are supplementary questions?

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Yes. Suite aux difficultés éprouvées par les membres d'équipage à maintenir l'auto-isolement et afin d'assurer la santé de la population, l'honorable ministre considère-t-il de les loger dans les centres comme pour le personnel médical et hôtelier pour effectuer leur quarantaine après un vol international?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think this should be discussed with the representatives of Air Mauritius on a platform looking after industrial relations. I am afraid I cannot give much detail at this stage.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, I did not hear the hon. Minister say anything about the protocol when these crew members return home, they have children, they have parents, their husband or wife, what is the protocol there? Will the disease not be transmitted to the immediate family members?

Dr. Jagutpal: This is the reason we have called for self-solation. Now, self-isolation at home definitely means that you cannot mix up with your family members. If this crew member cannot do that, then he has to be lodged in a hotel or in quarantine facilities so that he can observe the self-isolation.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/804 and B/805 have been withdrawn. Also PQs B/817, B/818 and B/819 have been withdrawn. Next question!

SPORTS ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/772) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Sports Act, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought thereto to make it mandatory for every National Sports Federation to constitute an Athletes' Commission.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, as recommended by the National Sports and Physical Activity Policy, my Ministry is presently working on a new legal framework to regulate and foster the sports sector. In May 2020, stakeholders as well as members of the public have

been invited to submit their suggestions and views for the preparation of the proposed Sports and Physical Activity Bill. One of the proposals that have been received relates to the setting up of an Athletes Commission at the level of the National Sports Federations. The proposal is being examined.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Merci, je me réjouis de la réponse de l'honorable ministre. Peut-on savoir si pendant ses consultations, l'honorable ministre a l'intention de mettre au centre des discussions les avantages d'une commission d'athlètes, notamment –

- (i) en étant un engagement en faveur de la bonne gouvernance ;
- (ii) en bénéficiant aux athlètes en s'assurant que les décisions prises tiennent en compte leurs impacts sur les athlètes, et
- (iii) en bénéficiant aux fédérations en servant d'interlocutrice pour assurer une bonne communication entre l'athlète et les fédérations.

Mr Toussaint: Merci, M. le président. Donc, je le redis, il y a une équipe au sein du ministère avec bien sûr la collaboration des officiers de l'*Attorney General's Office* et nous sommes en train d'examiner toutes les propositions reçues. Donc, il est prématuré à ce stade pour moi de faire quelques commentaires sur les autres propositions.

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président, l'honorable ministre est-il informé qu'il existe des directives du Comité Internationale Olympique relative à la création d'une Commission des athlètes au sein des Comités Nationaux Olympiques et dans lesquels le Comité International Olympique recommande que les athlètes participent à tous les échelons du mouvement sportif, y compris au sein des fédérations nationales ?

Mr Toussaint: Oui, je suis au courant.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

EARLY/TEENAGE PREGNANCIES – SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/773) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to early/teenage pregnancies, she will state, for the year 2018, 2019 and since January 2020 to date, the number thereof –

- (a) arising from sexual abuse, and
- (b) where the father is a minor.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the records of my Ministry, since 2018 to date, a total of 591 cases of early/teenage pregnancies arising from sexual abuse has been recorded out of which 29 cases where the father is a minor. For 2018, the number of early/teenage pregnancies arising from sexual abuse is 184. In 2019, it is at 215 and from January 2020 to date, it is 192.

As for part (b) of the question, the number of early/teenage pregnancies where the father is a minor, in 2018, there were nine cases recorded, in 2019, 10 cases recorded and in January 2020 to date, there have been 10 cases recorded.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Les chiffres sont très alarmants et afin de palier à ce problème, est-ce-que l'honorable ministre a l'intention de recommander au ministère de l'Education l'introduction de l'éducation sexuelle dans le cursus scolaire ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, educational sessions with respect to such situations are already ongoing through the Ministry, my Ministry itself. We have been reaching out through our workshops to, I can just verify the figure and I will just give that to you. Through our Children's Club and our Associations, some 3,260 children have been reached through PEC campaigns. Whether that should be included in the curriculum is something that will be taken up by the hon. Minister under whose mandate it is and she is just confirming that it is already in place.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. Pour rebondir sur la question supplémentaire de ma collègue, vu que les enfants des *Shelters* sont à risque, est-ce-que la ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre si son ministère envisage de dispenser l'éducation sexuelle dans les *Shelters* comme recommandé par la Ombudsperson for Children, Mme Rita Venkatasawmy, dans son rapport annuel 2019-2020. Merci, M. le président.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, children who are being housed in shelters already do undergo workshops and educational sessions with caregivers and professionals.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether she has the statistics out of the pregnancies from sexual abuse, the number thereof which are less than 16 because sexual intercourse below 16 is an offence? So, do you have the statistics out of the number you mentioned, how many related to teenagers below 16?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I do not have that specific number at hand but I shall be very happy to table it at some later date.

Mr Speaker: Hon Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Will the Minister kindly confirm to us as to what would have been the definition of early and teenage pregnancy in terms of age?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: What is the definition of early or teenage pregnancy ...

Dr. Aumeer: It seems quite alarming in terms of numbers. I just want to know whether the teenage pregnancy was encompassing those below 16 or whether the earlies were those between 10 and 12 which do happen particularly that I am a specialist in that sector, I do witness certain cases.

Mr Speaker: No statement, question please!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

Dr. Aumeer: I am just trying to help.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: As my hon. colleague would probably agree, there are new Bills coming to this Parliament imminently which are addressing such concerns and just to inform the House that any child below 16 or 18, a child pregnant is already - I did not quite understand whether the hon. Member wanted me to define the early pregnancy or to define a teenager. It is not quite part of the PQ that has been put to me.

Mr Speaker: Come on, no statement and the floor is to Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Peut-on savoir quelles étaient les sanctions prises contre les auteurs de ces agressions sexuelles contre mineures?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the father is a minor himself then we take both. I addressing myself to you, Mr Speaker, Sir, we take both minors under our charge and provide them with the required support. If in case the father is over 18 and has impregnated a teenager then obviously the case is straight away referred to the Police because it is a criminal matter.

Mr Speaker: So, we move to the next question!

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2003 – REVIEW

(No. B/775) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2003, he will state if same is being revised and, if so, indicate the process adopted

therefor, further indicating if prior consultations were held thereon and the stakeholders concerned therewith.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Development Strategy (NDS) is a national land use strategy which provides the basis for long term land use planning.

I am informed that the first land use plan entitled the National Physical Development Plan was published in 1994. This plan was revisited and its successor known as the National Development Strategy was then published in 2003 and is referred to in the question.

I am further informed that on 07 June 2019 a team of consultants was tasked with the review of the NDS 2003. This review, I am told, involves nine key processes, namely –

- (i) Mobilisation and Data Collection;
- (ii) Review of the Implementation of the 2003 NDS;
- (iii) Consultation with Stakeholders and submission of Sector Analysis Reports;
- (iv) Submission of Key Issues and Options Report;
- (v) Holding of a 1st Stakeholder Workshop;
- (vi) Drafting of the National Development Strategy;
- (vii) Holding of a 2nd Stakeholder Workshop;
- (viii) Finalisation of the NDS, and
- (ix) Drafting of an Action Plan or programme for Implementation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the information provided to me, consultations are ongoing and have so far involved 13 Ministries, 18 parastatal institutions, 12 local authorities, 14 private sector companies and 7 NGOs.

Furthermore, a Stakeholder Consultation Workshop was organised on 30 September and 01 October last with 40 participants representing some 34 different Government agencies, local authorities and NGOs.

I am also informed that once the draft document is ready it will be uploaded on the Ministry's website for views and comments and a 2nd consultative workshop will be held prior to finalising the revised NDS.

Before ending, I would like to point out that the National Development Strategy may be a misnomer since what is being dealt with here relates solely to land use planning. Appropriate rectifications will, therefore, be effected in due course.

Secondly, I am also informed that in 2003, the so-called National Development Strategy did not have within its ambit Rodrigues and our Outer Islands. This issue will also be addressed as soon as possible.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Like other MPs, I have received correspondences from many stakeholders, one of them being *Plateforme Maurice Environnement* which has addressed quite a comprehensive letter to the hon. Minister.

Mr Speaker: Question! Question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Minister his appreciation to the fact that in the invitation email to stakeholders by the Ministry, mention is made about broad consultations; however, the invitations have been very restrictive, as mentioned in the letter, and do not reflect the range of NGOs and stakeholders actively and, furthermore, involved in the domain and, furthermore, the scope of consultations were restricted to answering pre-defined questions on key issues rather than favouring ground up approach as normally should have been the case for an exercise of that magnitude?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I would simply invite the hon. gentleman not to take at face value any allegation that is made. My instructions are clear that the consultation process should involve all relevant stakeholders, and if the hon. gentleman has any particular agencies in mind, I am very open to any suggestions to make sure that they are taken onboard, but my understanding is that each and every stakeholder known to the Ministry or which makes itself known to the Ministry, will be taken onboard.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. Again, from information that has been forwarded to me, and I am going to table the correspondences, it would appear that participants during the half-day workshop were informed that climate change is not seen as an underlying concern in the review of the National Development Strategy. May I have a reaction from the hon. Minister at a time, even today itself, we are discussing the Climate Change Bill which at clause 6 of the Bill, on the functions and powers of the Council, specifically calls for making of climate change policies and set priorities for adapting land use, specifically mentioned there?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If what the hon. gentleman is saying were true, it would be, of course, most surprising and improper. Let me assure him that climate change is

at the centre of Government's preoccupations, hence, the Bill introduced by my colleague and which is presently being debated.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. In order to dispel any misconception and misunderstanding, I am going to table the official documents that have been forwarded to all MPs and...

Mr Speaker: May I ask a question? Are these documents authenticated?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, they are. It was in the Press...

Mr Speaker: Before you continue with that...

Mr Osman Mahomed: ...and it is signed.

Mr Speaker: ...let us verify it first.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes.

Mr Speaker: Send the documents to the Table!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Again, from the - can I?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Osman Mahomed: From the correspondences which are being authenticated, it seems that the original terms of reference of the NDS Review have not been amended to take into account the ensuing context of COVID-19, then the Wakashio disaster, and their cumulative fall out on Mauritius, as per the correspondence. I was not privy of the process, so I had to base on what has been forwarded to me.

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Minister of his appreciation of this statement made in the letter?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am very mindful of those issues, which is why I regret greatly that the hon. gentleman who was invited to our National Forum on Land and Housing chose not to attend. But, certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me assure the House that I am meeting with the consultants and shall ensure that any and every relevant factor is fully taken into consideration.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.03 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.40 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please, be seated! Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**NATIONAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD - BUILDING
MATERIALS SCHEMES - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. B/776) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the casting of Roof Slab, Re-roofing of Slab and Purchase of Building Materials Schemes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the number of beneficiaries thereof in each category, indicating the number of applications –

- (a) approved, and
- (b) processed as at to date, since the last disbursement exercise in or about July 2020.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information provided by the NHDC Ltd, since July 2020, 650 applications have been received, including 628 in relation to Roof Slab Grant, 22 applications concerning Re-roofing whereas no application has been recorded pertaining to the Purchase of Buildings Materials Grant.

Out of the 650 applications received, 620, I am informed, have already been processed and 607 have been approved so far. This figure includes 587 applications for the Roof Slab Grant and 20 applications for the Re-roofing Grant.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. I received many people at my constituency office and I know some of them are waiting since July. The current set up at the NHDC is to wait for the batch to arrive at a certain size, and then, in a ceremony, the cheque is remitted to the beneficiary. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether it cannot be such that no ceremony needed? When I was Managing Director at the NHDC, once people's cheques have been processed...

Mr Speaker: Question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: ...they come to the office and collect it, avoiding delays to the beneficiaries who are waiting for this money to cast their slabs sometimes. Even the person

who subsequently became Managing Director, Mr Bashir Khodabux, he continued with that system as well...

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: ... up until the new Government came into office.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I welcome the advice tendered by the learned gentleman and I will certainly look into it.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, another facility that could be extended to the beneficiary would be to resort back to applicants going to the CAB office instead at the NHDC in Rose Hill, which is the case right now. Because people coming from far, sometimes when they wrongly filed the document...

Mr Speaker: This is an Adjournment Matter!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether...

Mr Speaker: Question Time! Put your question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have started my question, you are not listening.

Mr Speaker: Put your question right now! I listen to you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: This is what I just did.

Mr Speaker: Now, you are exaggerating. I give you a last chance to put your question.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have started, I said: can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister....? This is the start of a question.

Mr Speaker: Go ahead!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether it can be envisaged to process applications at the CAB office instead at the NHDC in Rose Hill, to avoid to and fro from applicants coming from afar, and facilitating their life in the process?

Mr Speaker: Very good!

The Deputy Prime Minister: It seems to be a sensible suggestion and I shall enquire from the NHDC whether appropriate arrangements can be made.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what is the amount that has been disbursed to date on that item and how does it compare to the budgeted amount voted in Parliament for slab?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If the hon. gentleman will bear with me, I shall try and see whether I do have that information at hand.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sorry, I have not responded. So, the amount disbursed – what I can see from the information provided to me, 2015: Rs98 m.; 2016: Rs111 m.; 2017: Rs71 m.; 2018: Rs109 m.; 2019: Rs74 m. approximately. Now, in year 2020, some Rs.9.9 m, so, let us say, Rs10 m. have been disbursed in July 2020 and there is an amount of nearly Rs46 m. which is to be disbursed in respect of 607 beneficiaries shortly. Whereas the total amount earmarked for Financial Year 2020/2021, is in the order of Rs100 m.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. In his original statement, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has stated that only 22 applications have been received for the re-roofing of roof slab. Can I ask him whether it can be envisaged to lighten the cumbersome procedures leading to the onset processing of a re-roofing slab, which entails sometimes re-drawing the house, submitting fresh drawing and, in the process, many people whose slabs are almost on the verge of falling, do not benefit from that scheme?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must confess I did not know the hon. gentleman was at the NHDC, so he seems to have specialist knowledge and, of course, I would welcome any suggestion he would care to make. In fact, I expected him to ask why there was no application under the Purchase of Building Materials Scheme, which is also a matter of concern. I have been looking into that aspect to see whether there is any point in maintaining this grant if nobody is interested, and I know that the quantum has been raised so that it is as advantageous to apply for a Purchase of Building Materials Grant, as opposed to a Roof Slab Grant. But the re-roofing grant is what seems to interest the hon. gentleman, and yes, if the impediment here is the cumbersome procedure, I shall request the NHDC to look into it, and again, I would welcome any suggestions that the hon. gentleman would care to make.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/779 has been withdrawn. Next question!

MINISTRY OF HEALTH - DR. C. G. - SENIOR ADVISER

(No. B/777) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness 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.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, Dr. C. G. is employed on a contract basis as Senior Adviser on public health matters with effect from 19 April 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of her academic qualifications and her wide professional experience in the field of medicine, her services have been retained by my Ministry.

As regards to part (b) of the question, Dr. C. G. is employed for a period of one year and her contract is renewable. She earns a salary of Rs120,000 monthly and is entitled to a special allowance of Rs20,000 monthly. She has an official chauffeur-driven car provided by the Ministry at her disposal.

Additionally, she enjoys passage benefits of 5% of her annual salary.

Dr. C. G. has been granted a cellular phone and free calls up to Rs2,000 monthly and will be entitled to two months' salary on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service.

The terms and conditions of her contract are in accordance with recommendations of PRB 2016.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (c) of this question, the duties of Dr. C. G. are -

- to advise the Ministry on the strategy to strengthen our preparedness and response for the COVID-19 and other communicable diseases;
- to propose an action plan for an effective response to COVID-19 or/and other infectious diseases;
- to advise on an appropriate post-curfew strategy and action plan;

- to advise on the review/revamping of our public health programmes, health care planning and surveillance systems;
- to advise and provide technical assistance in epidemiology and monitoring & evaluation activities;
- to assess the adequacy of the existing procedures and policies regarding control of infectious diseases in Hospitals and other Health Care Institutions, Homes for the Elderly, Shelters, Reform Institutions, Prisons, Educational Institutions and other public places vulnerable to spread of diseases;
- to advise on the appropriate training needs of health care workers on communicable diseases control;
- to advise on, and assist in, conducting public health sensitization campaigns, and
- to perform such other cognate duties as may be assigned by the Minister.

As regards part (d) of the question, Dr. C. G. has been employed on a contract basis after obtention of all necessary clearances from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

Mr Juman: Is Dr. Gaud registered as a medical practitioner at the Medical Council?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, Dr. Gaud, if I am not mistaken, is not registered for the time being with the Medical Council of Mauritius.

Mr Juman: Is she allowed to give medical advice?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. Dr. Gaud is advised to give medical advice similarly like Dr. Owen was employed by the Ministry on diabetes matters. He also was employed on contract basis to give medical advice.

Mr Juman: Has he been registered at the Medical Council?

Dr. Jagutpal: Similarly, like Dr. Owen advised the Ministry on diabetology.

Mr Juman: Can the Minister inform the House if Dr. Gaud is still acting as *courtier* to the Ministry of Health for the procurement of certain medicines from Reunion Island?

Mr Speaker: I disallow this question about *courtier* and whatever. You do not have the right to use this language in the House.

Mr Juman: Agent? I am tabling some copies of correspondence between the Ministry of Health and Dr. Gaud between November onwards, where her services - as you said not *courtier* but agent...

Mr Speaker: Again, I disallow the question. And this is not the language to be used towards the Chair. I disallow the question. We move to the next question.

Your next question, hon. Juman!

HOSPITALS, MEDICLINICS, AREA HEALTH CENTRES, WAREHOUSES & STORES - FIRE CERTIFICATE

(No. B/778) 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.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has under its responsibility 5 Regional Hospitals, 2 District Hospitals, 2 Community Hospitals, 4 Specialised Hospitals, 6 Mediclinics, 19 Area Health Centres, 114 Community Health Centres, 6 warehouses/stores. Most of the buildings are government-owned and a few are rented ones.

I am informed that 34 buildings have a valid Fire Certificate issued by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service.

In August 2020, the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms informed my Ministry that all minor and major improvements had to be made in respect of all the buildings which did not have valid Fire Certificates. 91 issues requiring minor improvements and 24 requiring major improvements have been identified.

I am further informed that 74 requests are under process at the level of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service.

My Ministry has been given up to August 2021 to address all the major improvements.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a monitoring committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry and comprising all the Regional Health Directors, Regional Health Services Administrators and, *inter alia*, the Director, Safety and Health of the Ministry of the Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms and the Chief Fire Officer of the Mauritius

Fire and Rescue Service has been set up. The Monitoring Committee is meeting regularly to look into all the improvements to be made.

As at date, nearly all minor improvements have been addressed and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service is presently carrying out inspections prior to issuing Fire Certificates.

Regarding the major improvements, works are being monitored regularly by the Monitoring Committee set up.

I wish to point out that all the buildings are equipped with the necessary fire systems and equipment including fire extinguishers, fire alarm systems, smoke detectors and fire exits.

Furthermore, Safety and Health Officers from the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms carry out regular visits to the healthcare institutions to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005.

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker, thank you. Is the hon. Minister aware that, according to an internal audit report, the warehouses found at Sunray and Tobacco Board, where Rs1.2 billion stock of medical equipment and medicine are stored, have no fire certificate since last six years and the report dates back to May 2020. Can I know from the Minister what has been done so far because, up to now, there is no fire certificate?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding Sunray warehouse, the Ministry is in the process of moving all the medicines stored there to the Castel new warehouse that the Ministry has taken on rent. One unit has already been transferred and other Departments will follow.

As for Tobacco warehouse, there was no electricity for years. The electricity has already been supplied and procedures are underway for getting the fire certificate.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Can the hon. Minister update the House on the fire outbreak at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and the outcome of the Police enquiry, if any?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have the information for the fire outbreak. The fire broke out in that section on 22 August 2020. All the office equipment and furniture have been damaged. Furniture and new PCs have been provided; ducting for ventilation and flooring have been completed. The Finance Section will operate normally once the work is

over, by mid-November and, so far, we have not received any detail about the inquiry that is being conducted by the Police.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Are our public health centres, hospitals, etc., insured against fire?

Dr. Jagutpal: I have given the answer at the beginning. I have already cited all the hospitals and the number of buildings that have the fire certificates and the number of buildings that are in the process of obtaining same.

Mr Juman: Insurance?

Dr. Jagutpal: No, I do not have the information about insurance policies with me.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. X. L. Duval!

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT - SUPPLIER

(No. B/779) Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to personal protective equipment, he will state the number thereof, purchased since June 2020 to date, indicating the

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- (a) present stock thereof;
- (b) name of the supplier/s, and
- (c) cost thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATORS - PROCUREMENT

(No. B/780) Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the artificial respirators procured since March 2020 to date, he will state the -

- (a) number thereof, and
- (b) name of the supplier/s thereof, indicating if they are covered by a maintenance contract.

Dr. Jagutpal: Since PQ B/780 and B/792 are related, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will reply to both simultaneously.

I wish to inform the House that since March 2020, 10 ventilators have been procured from Ducray Lenoir Ltd and 50 ventilators from Pack & Blister.

I am informed that the equipment purchased from Ducray Lenoir Ltd are covered by a one-year warranty and the equipment procured from Pack & Blister had a one-year warranty on purchase, which was subsequently extended to 3 years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 50 ventilators purchased from Pack & Blister were received at the Ministry on 31 July 2020, after all custom formalities were cleared. These equipment have yet to be commissioned as my Ministry is waiting for the arrival of the two technicians from Alpress, the manufacturing company in Turkey, who will install the machines together with the accessories. Their arrival has been confirmed for 12 November 2020.

The equipment can only be commissioned after installation and thereafter put to use.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can I ask the hon. Minister what was the point of buying these equipment under emergency procedures, without tender when, in fact, they are still months after yet to be commissioned?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the time the emergency procurement was done, Mauritius was having COVID-19 transmission cases in the community. Can you imagine what was the situation at that time? We have based the procurement of these equipment after having considered the worst case scenario. There were, in addition, various PQs asking the Government to purchase additional equipment.

The equipment we have procured are already in Mauritius and it is a fact that we are now COVID-safe. Allow me here to point out that out of our already existing pool of ventilators, that is, those available before the procurement of new ones, 30 are reaching their lifespan within the next one or two years. Of course, the new equipment will replace the old machinery that will no longer be in use.

Mr X. L. Duval: I will come to Ducray Lenoir in the next question, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission. I would like to ask the hon. Minister who are the local representatives of Pack & Blister who will provide spares and service its maintenance contract over the next three years? Which company, here in Mauritius, is going to do that for Pack & Blister?

Dr. Jagutpal: For Pack & Blister, Mr Speaker, Sir, before purchasing the equipment, the Ministry has already submitted the information that these equipment have to be serviced by the company. This is why the technicians are coming to Mauritius to train the Biomedical

Engineers. They are reaching Mauritius on 12 November. I have mentioned it in my answer. They will come to Mauritius to train the Biomedical Engineers for the servicing and in the contract, it is also stipulated that the company will provide the spare parts when needed.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

So, you do not have any question; you raised your hand.

Mr Mohamed: I have one question, but ...

Mr Speaker: I give you the floor, you don't disrepute the floor.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you. I wanted to ask the hon. Minister, since he has already admitted that there is no local company or agent representing the company Pack & Blister in Mauritius, there is none, could he tell us that during this whole time that Mauritius was in confinement and then not in confinement, what is the level of preparedness for the use of such respirators? Has his Ministry been provided with facilities to train medical staff for the use of such machines and as it stands today, how many staff have been trained on those particular machines and if they have not been trained, how long will it take for them to be trained and how many staff are we talking about?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, acquiring those machines means we should have the points where these machines can be installed. At the New Souillac Hospital and the ENT hospital, the points were already installed so that these machines can be placed over there.

Now, regarding the next part of the question as to whether the health personnel have been trained. Yes, they have been trained to use the machines, but the machines have to be commissioned by the technicians. They are reaching Mauritius on 12 November and thereafter these machines can be used.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Minister for including B/792 in your answer. Can you confirm whether one of the two anaesthetists who approved the emergency procurement as per the expressed request of the advice of the Prime Minister's Office, submitted his resignation well before his retirement in order to avoid commissioning these ventilators? I am talking about commissioning, not about technicians coming and setting up the ventilators.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the doctor, I believe he is referring to is the Anesthesiologists who have retired from the service. Whether he has retired on personal ground or not, I am not in a position to give this answer. Probably, he can come up with another PQ on that. I will definitely provide the answer then.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Can the hon. Minister, please, confirm whether these ventilators that have been bought from Pack & Blister and have not yet been installed, as he said to the points of service, whether there is information that these ventilators have a major software problem with them and that is why now, expressly, as he mentioned, we are having the arrival of technicians on 12 November? Thank you for your answer.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, let the technicians come first. Let the doctors who are going to work on this and the biomedical engineers give their recommendations. At this very moment, it is not possible for me to give the answers. Let us wait for the arrival of the technicians and then we will give the hon. Member the answers.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. X. L. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have another question on this question.

Mr Speaker: No. I have already given six supplementary questions.

Mr X. L. Duval: Not to me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have only got two. This is an *arnaque*, Mr Speaker, Sir. They are stealing money.

Mr Speaker: Your question now is B/781, you go ahead with it.

Mr X. L. Duval: Under protest, B/781.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS – ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATORS

(No. B/781) **Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the artificial respirators in public health institutions, he will state the number thereof, indicating if they are fully operational.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are 16 artificial ventilators at Victoria Hospital,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Jagutpal: ...out of which 15 are operational. Out of the 14 ventilators at ENT Hospital, 13 are functional.

At SSRN Hospital, there are 18 ventilators and 17 are working. All 9 ventilators at Flacq Hospital are operational.

Out of the 19 ventilators at Jeetoo Hospital, 18 are in working order.

Nehru Hospital is endowed with 14 ventilators, out of which 13 are operational. New Souillac Hospital has 6 ventilators and all of them are functioning.

I am further informed that New Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Rodrigues, has 6 ventilators. They are all in good working condition. The Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, Cardiac Centre has 14 ventilators, out of which 11 are operational.

Altogether, there are 116 ventilators available in our public health institutions including Rodrigues and 108 are functioning.

Mr X. L. Duval: May I? Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the 10 ventilators from Ducray Lenoir purchased also since March, whether these have been installed and are functioning?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, these ventilators have been installed and they are functioning.

Mr X. L. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister, therefore also, whether for the current ventilators, there are maintenance contracts with the suppliers? And how is it that for the 50 that he has purchased recently and which will be installed, the maintenance contract is being given to an overseas absentee firm which is going to train our own biomedical engineers in the public service to do the work for them, whilst they are overseas and being paid for the service contract?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, as for the ventilators in our hospital, not all of them have a service contract from the suppliers. Some of them are still being maintained by the biomedical engineers of the Ministry of Health.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker...

Mr Speaker: I will come back to you.

Mr X. L. Duval: There are questions which have not been answered.

Mr Speaker: I will come back to you.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether provision has been made for backup ventilators?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the number of ventilators that are operational, that is, 108, not all of them are in use currently. Only 88 are in use. So, it means that it makes round about 18 ventilators are kept as backup ventilators in the hospital. In case there is a breakdown, these backup ventilators will be put to use.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wanted to come back to the question...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No exchange of comments!

Mr X. L. Duval: The question that I asked the Minister was on the maintenance contract for the 50 ventilators he has just purchased. How is it that he has given a maintenance contract to an overseas absentee firm with apparently no local representative, who are going to train the biomedical engineers in the public service itself to repair the machines, whilst they are sitting in Spain or whatever? How can that be? *Est-ce que ce n'est une arnaque?*

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the biomedical engineers of the Ministry of Health are the technicians. They decide upon the specification of the ventilators, they take the decisions about the maintenance, about the lifespan of these machines. So, we rely on technicians and on the biomedical engineers.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you don't have the right to comment a reply.

An hon. Member: *Li envi alle dehors!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You don't have the right!

(Interruptions)

You don't have the right! You don't have the right!

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I reply to the question, that these are technical specificities, that the biomedical technicians take the decisions to whether the contract should be allotted to the company which is supplying the apparatus or the supplier. I have to point out here the suppliers, they are not the manufacturers of the ventilators, they do only supply the ventilators and the suppliers, they have engineers that do the servicing and all spare parts are again...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Jagutpal: ...bought by the manufacturers. So, if the Ministry of Health, under the guidance of the biomedical engineers, is purchasing the ventilators and is getting the training, as it is mentioned in the contract and the spare parts, I don't know, hon. Member, what is wrong with that?

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr X. L. Duval: Could the hon. Minister circulate a copy of the contract for maintenance with Pack and Blister, and tell us, why it is that it is necessary to pay for three years' maintenance contract, when the person/persons are not in Mauritius and the machines are going to be serviced by people working for the Ministry of Health, full-time civil servants?

Dr. Jagutpal: Hon. Member, I think I have already replied to your question. Suppliers who are in Mauritius are not the manufacturers. Whenever there is a need, they do the same. Engineers decide on the spare parts and these spare parts have to be imported. I think I have replied to your question.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

COVID-19 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE SCHEMES – BENEFICIARIES & FUNDS DISBURSED

(No. B/782) 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 COVID-19 emergency assistance schemes, other than the Wage Assistance Scheme, put in place since March 2020 to date, he will state the amount of funds disbursed thereunder to micro, small and medium enterprises, indicating the –

(a) names of the beneficiaries, and

(b) amount disbursed therefor.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, dès le 13 mars 2020, le gouvernement a introduit une série de mesures via son "Plan de soutien aux entreprises" afin de contenir les effets négatifs de la COVID-19 subis par les entreprises.

Ces mesures ont ainsi été déployées par la Banque de Maurice, la *Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd*, la *State Investment Corporation Ltd*, l'*Investment Support Programme Ltd*, le *SME Equity Fund Ltd*, l'*Economic Development Board* et *SME Mauritius Ltd*.

Le "Plan de soutien aux entreprises" a par la suite été suivi par un ensemble complémentaire de mesures annoncées dans le Budget 2020/21 au travers du "Plan de Relance de l'Investissement et de l'Economie", et cela pour faciliter la reprise des activités des entreprises touchées par la COVID-19.

Sur une base globale, j'ai été informé qu'au 30 octobre 2020, quelque 5,25 milliards de roupies ont déjà été engagés en faveur de 2,999 bénéficiaires.

Les bénéficiaires sont des micros, petites et moyennes entreprises mais aussi des entreprises de taille moyenne et mêmes des grandes entreprises.

M. le président, sous la Section 64 (1) (a) de la *Banking Act*, il est formellement interdit pour une banque commerciale de divulguer les informations relatives à ses clients; les officiers ayant jurés un serment de confidentialité.

A cet égard, il m'est impossible de divulguer le nom des bénéficiaires et le montant de chacun des soutiens accordés par l'intermédiaire des banques commerciales.

En ce qui concerne les bénéficiaires via les autres institutions susmentionnées, les informations sont en train d'être compilées et seront déposées prochainement.

Le montant total accordé aux PME et MME sera lui aussi déposé.

Merci.

Mr X. L. Duval: I thank the Minister for his reply. There are various schemes and he is going to give us the names and the numbers or whatever in due course. But, can he give us at least, according to the amounts that have been promised in his famous Press Conference, etc., how much of that has been disbursed under each of the lines of help that he is going to give, for instance, the SMI Factoring Scheme, the Equity Financing Scheme? How much in

each what was promised and how much has been disbursed? Would he have that information to hand? I am sure he must be monitoring that closely.

Dr. Padayachy: Je vais essayer de récolter toutes les informations qu'a demandées l'honorable membre et je déposerai ces informations à l'Assemblée.

Mr Uteem: In his Budget Speech 2020, the hon. Minister of Finance announced that DBM Bank will invest Rs10 billion in the SME sector. So, may I know out of this sum of Rs10 billion, how much has been disbursed? Because the hon. Minister mentioned a total of Rs5 billion for all enterprises, including big enterprises.

Dr. Padayachy: Encore une fois, M. le président, je vais essayer de recueillir toutes les informations concernant la *DBM* et je les déposerai à l'Assemblée.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Richard Duval!

COVID-19 VACCINE - ACQUISITION

(No. B/783) **Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to COVID-19 Vaccine, he will state if same is now available on the international market, indicating the present level of preparedness of Government for the acquisition thereof, indicating -

- (a) the amount of funds committed therefor, and
- (b) if any contract has been entered into with international laboratories and pharmaceutical companies in relation thereto.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are 200 vaccines or pre-vaccines which are under study. Moreover, there are 10 vaccines which are in phase 3 around the world. Even though some of them are showing promising results, they still have to go through further scientific tests before moving to validation process.

When choosing a vaccine, several important aspects must be taken into consideration, namely, the percentage of effectiveness, the degree and protection period and the long and short-term vaccine safety. It normally takes around ten years to produce a vaccine. The global mobilisation to find an effective vaccine is remarkable and will, undoubtedly, shorten the timeframe. However, the urge to carry out the tests quickly should not undermine the safety aspects. According to WHO, there would not be any vaccine available before mid-2021.

However, to bank on any vaccine is dangerous and to gamble on it, can be costly.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

Dr. Jagutpal: It is to be noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly vulnerable people would be putting their lives at risk, namely, those over the age of 65 years, those who suffer from obesity and people with unbalanced co-morbidities, namely, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, or respiratory failure. It is mostly for them and for the front liners that we are all looking forward to this vaccine.

In this context, my Ministry in collaboration with the WHO has joined the COVAX Facility to be able to secure doses for the future vaccine for at least 20% of our population. Regarding part (a) of the question, my Ministry made a payment of USD 416,000 for 20% of the population on 09 October 2020.

As regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry has not entered into any agreement with international laboratories and pharmaceutical companies for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine, as we stand guided by WHO.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all aware of claims made by Pfizer and BioNTech pertaining to the development of a potential vaccine. Although this piece of information is very encouraging indeed, we can only rely on scientific data before getting the assurance of a breakthrough. As of now, there is very little precise data on the efficacy of this potential vaccine. The companies involved in its development are stating that the vaccine facilitates the production of antibodies, but other vital scientific information is still missing. For example, so far, we still have no precise data on the cellular immune response of the vaccine and its short and long-term safety.

The House will note that similar breakthroughs have also been widely publicised by the media in the past. This was the case of the Russian Sputnik vaccine. Today, it has completely disappeared from mainstream media even though this vaccine was more scientifically documented than any other potential vaccines we got to know about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we look forward to a positive outcome and will continue our collaboration with the WHO and the COVAX Facility. Should a 100% efficient vaccine be developed, then approved and validated by WHO, we have already taken the necessary and appropriate steps to acquire the required doses for our population.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Richard Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, did the Minister himself take it in this august Assembly that the Government signed an agreement with Gavi Alliance with regard to the acquisition of 260,000 vaccines? Will the hon. Minister table this Agreement to the House and also what Government has put in place regarding the storage of the vaccine that shall be procured?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information to be tabled, but surely I will table the Agreement that we have made. As to the second part of the question about the storage of the vaccine once it is available, the Ministry has already taken the steps when the vaccine will be available, where it will be stored. That much has already been done by the Ministry.

Mr R. Duval: Can I ask the hon. Minister what are the protocol that his Ministry put in place when those vaccines will be used on the population?

Dr. Jagutpal: Now, since 20% of the population will get the vaccines in the first instance, these vaccines would be administered, namely to vulnerable groups, as I have already stated, elderly people with co-morbidities and the health care workers, that is, the front liners.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't understand this scheme that the Ministry has got into to purchase 20% of the vaccine for the population. Is this assuming that only one dose is required for the population?

Secondly which vaccine are we talking about that you have actually reserved 20% of? That's a thing and then, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the same issue, the Minister said that he is waiting for a vaccine that is 100% effective, but even the flu vaccine is only 50% effective that we are using at the moment. So, I don't understand.

Firstly, which vaccine we have supposedly reserved for 20% of the population: first dose, second dose? He has to be precise.

Secondly, why are we going to wait for 100% effectiveness when even for vaccines that you are vaccinating old people for the flu it is not 100%?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have made reference to the PQ previously asked to me and the hon. Member has already at that time stated that we should have done shopping and buying all the vaccines that are available and that would have been....

Mr Speaker: No reply from this side!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jagutpal: ...that would have been catastrophic. Can you imagine buying vaccines that are not validated that have not...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order on this side! There is a reply going on.

(Interruptions)

No, you don't have the floor! You don't have the floor, hon. Member! I should give you the floor first.

Mr X.L. Duval: Please give me the floor, I'll...

Mr Speaker: No, I will not give you the floor.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir...

Mr Speaker: Next question!

(Interruptions)

Next question!

BASIC COMMODITIES – PRICE CONTROL

(No. B/784) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to basic commodities, he will state the measures taken to -

- (a) control the increase in the price thereof, and
- (b) monitor the supplies thereof with a view to protecting the rights of consumers.

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has been monitoring the level of supplies as well as prices of essential commodities before, during and after the COVID-19 lockdown period. I would like, with your permission, to refer to the reply I made on PQ B/104 regarding measures taken to protect the rights of consumers and their purchasing power during and after the COVID-19 lockdown period.

Officers of my Ministry are ensuring that controlled commodities are being offered at prescribed prices, there is an adequate supply of essential commodities in Mauritius and

prices of goods are properly affixed. As at date, there is no shortage of basic commodity on the market.

I would like to reassure the hon. Member that my Ministry will strive hard to ensure that there is a continuous supply of essential commodities on the market despite that we know that the global context is very difficult at the moment.

As far as price increases are concerned, my Ministry carried out an in-depth market analysis of consumer and trader behaviour which revealed that the appreciation of the major foreign currencies was the major cause of increase in consumer prices during the COVID-19 lockdown period and the immediate aftermath. Moreover, the study also demonstrated that following an appreciation in foreign currencies, about 10.38% of the appreciation was absorbed by the importer while only 2.17% was transmitted to the consumer prices for foodstuffs. Fluctuations in the freight cost were fully transmitted to the consumer prices.

My Ministry will continue its sensitisation campaigns on consumer education and responsibilities and will ensure that consumers are able to make rational decisions. As far as traders are concerned, my Ministry will continue to visit trade premises and will ensure that there is no breach of any consumer protection legislation. To this effect, the Consumer Affairs Unit has been empowered to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to traders as from 01 November 2020.

Mr R. Duval: According to Statistics of Mauritius, there have been 38 products which price has been monitored since 2012 on a monthly regular basis. Can the hon. Minister tell the House why the price of those products, namely *produits de base*, has gone tremendously when you look at different brands?

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned in my reply, there has been an increase in the foreign exchange currency in all the major foreign currencies and secondly, there has been an increase in the freight costs as well and thirdly, due to the COVID-19, the supply of these products from abroad has reduced considerably. So, it's a question of demand and supply.

Mr R. Duval: Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House, how come price control in Mauritius in fraction of the amount of control of product in Rodrigues, isn't it that Rodrigues with lesser resources are good better than Mauritius on consumer protection policy?

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do agree. Actually, in Rodrigues, we have seen that, but since the market is very small in Rodrigues, it's very simple to monitor compared to the bigger market in Mauritius.

Mr Mohamed: Sorry, thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister has made reference to a report whereby he finds that everything is being done and such no burden is being placed unduly so, on the shoulders of the consumer. Could he be so kind as to table the report?

Mr Sawmynaden: What report?

Mr Mohamed: He made reference to a report in his answer, a survey that was carried out.

Mr Sawmynaden: I said a study was carried out.

Mr Mohamed: Study - so, if the hon. Minister could be so kind as to table the study.

Mr Sawmynaden: I have already given the answer about the appreciation and the importer. This is something at the level of my Ministry, I will need to check.

Mr Mohamed: Will he do the needful to table the study?

Mr Sawmynaden: I will check as this is internal.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Richard Duval, last supplementary!

Mr R. Duval: Can the hon. Minister tell the House why cargo transshipment vessels, which are normally taking 20 to 25 days, are now taking more than 60 to 65 days? Doesn't it threaten to bring a rupture of stock in certain products for the future?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, the question of transshipment does not fall under the level of my Ministry. I think the specific question should be addressed to the appropriate Ministry.

Mr Speaker: Hon. R. Duval, next question!

CONSTITUENCY 12 - FLOOD PRONE REGIONS

(No. B/785) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to Constituency 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, the list of flood prone regions thereat and

table copy thereof, indicating where matters stand as to the implementation of drain projects thereat.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for this question. I am informed by the Land Drainage Authority that three regions in Constituency No.12 have been determined and certified as high risk flood-prone areas where life and the quality of life, and the environment may be seriously compromised in the event of flooding.

As requested by the hon. Member, I am tabling a list thereof as well as a status of drain projects being implemented in Constituency No.12 by the National Development Unit to mitigate the impact of flooding.

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Minister. In view of the suffering of the preparedness of flood prone, can the hon. Minister state if survey has been carried out to identify the problem that occurs specifically during the recent flood? And will the Minister confirm that he has taken into special consideration, high risk areas like namely S.S.R. Lane, Mare Tabac, Doolar Lane, Camizard Lane, rue des Flamands and rue de la Colonie in Mahebourg?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already replied, the Land Drainage Authority has already done an extensive survey and established the high flood-prone areas and there are three in Constituency No.12.

As far as the specific regions being mentioned by the hon. Member, yes, currently he must know that there are some drain works that are being done in Mare Tabac. That's ongoing. We have ongoing works in Cité Langlois in Plaine Magnien. We have ongoing work in Karan Lane, Mahebourg and we have a list of 20 flood-prone areas, out of which for 15, it is completed, 4 is ongoing and for one, there is geotechnical investigation being done.

I don't have all the specific regions mentioned by the Member, but as far as Camizard Lane being concerned, this is not qualified as a flood-prone area by the LDA. We are currently looking at the very critical areas. Obviously, we would have loved to do it all over the place, but there is only so much we can do and we have set priorities. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Has been answered already. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

COVID-19 - AIR MAURITIUS CABIN CREW - PROTOCOL

(No. B/786) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to COVID-19, he will state if he is aware of any recent case of breach of self-isolation protocol by the member/s of the cabin crew of Air Mauritius Ltd., and, if so, indicate the actions taken to avoid the recurrence thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/771)

INDIAN OCEAN - TUNA FISHING - BOYCOTT

(No. B/787) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to tuna fishing in the Indian Ocean, he will state if he is aware of the threat of boycott expressed by some chains of supermarkets in Europe as a protest of overfishing thereof and, if so, indicate the measures envisaged to address same.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that this is not the first time that European NGOs come in the forefront to press for a reduction in the catch of mainly yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean. This happens every time meetings of the IOTC are to be held.

I am also informed that this time two UK retailers, namely Tesco and the Co-op Group as well as one Belgian firm Colruyt, have declared their intention to boycott tuna products being processed in the Indian Ocean by coastal states of the IOTC. The main qualm of these pressure groups is that the IOTC is not implementing effective management measures for the sustainable exploitation of yellowfin tuna.

As the House may be aware, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, have been setup to manage tuna resources which are highly migratory pelagic species, and which are not confined to any specific area.

Membership of IOTC is open to Indian Ocean coastal states as well as to countries or regional economic integration organisations which are members of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies and are fishing tuna in the Indian Ocean. Currently, the IOTC has 31 contracting members, including 19 Indian Ocean coastal states, namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France for Reunion Island, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Pakistan, Seychelles, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Republic of South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Thailand.

Each year, the IOTC meets and based on statistics submitted by parties, takes the necessary management measures to ensure the sustainable exploitation of different species of tuna.

Based on the analysis of data submitted by member states, the yellowfin tuna has been found to be subject to overfishing. Accordingly, IOTC has adopted rigorous conservation and management measures relating to catch and effort reduction to allow the stock of yellowfin tuna to recover.

In this respect, during the 20th Session of the IOTC held in 2016, a resolution relating to the reduction of purse seine catch of yellowfin tuna by 15% was adopted for member states catching more than 5000 tonnes. In view of the fact that Mauritius was catching less than 5000 tonnes it was exempted. However, in 2019, at the 23rd Session of the IOTC, Mauritius was included in the list of countries required to reduce their catch by 7.5% as its purse seine catch had exceeded the 5,000 tonnes limit.

I am informed that the 24th Session of the IOTC Virtual Meeting was held from 02 to 06 November 2020. During this session, the Mauritian delegation made a statement on its commitment towards the sustainability of the yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean.

Mauritius supported the setting up of management procedures and a quota allocation scheme to ensure the sustainability of the stocks of yellowfin tuna. The delegation also made a statement regarding the declared intention of some buyers to boycott Indian Ocean tuna which will be detrimental to the economy of the coastal states which are processing tuna taking into consideration the already marked economic downturn worldwide.

The Mauritian delegation also supported the proposal to hold a special session of the Commission to address the issue of yellowfin tuna stock status subsequent to the Scientific Committee to be held in December 2020.

I am further informed that the 7.5% catch reduction of yellowfin tuna, which was allocated to Small Island Developing States, (SIDS), has been rolled over till the next special session scheduled for early next year. Mauritius is fully committed to the sustainability of fish resources in the Indian Ocean and would stand guided by the work of the Scientific Committee. Mauritius also subscribes to the decision taken at the level of the heads of delegations concerning proposals for fresh resolutions.

Accordingly, the Mauritian delegation recommended that the IOTC should issue an appropriate statement expressing its concern for the intention of the buyers and to reassure

the International Community that necessary measures will be taken at the appropriate time and with appropriate scientific advice to ensure the continued sustainability of fish stocks in the Indian Ocean.

Our recommendations were supported by the participating countries and in particular by Japan, Indonesia, Seychelles and India which have strongly voiced out their support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, management of tuna stock of the Indian Ocean requires concerted efforts of all coastal states and the European Union whose fishing vessels exploit their resources and the license issued by coastal states.

I wish to assure the House that Mauritius is committed to preserve the tuna stocks with a view to ensuring sustainable exploitation while also safeguarding the interest of our tuna Industry.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

BATS - SPECIAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

(No. B/788) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to bats, he will state if a Special Technical Committee has been set up therefor at the level of his Ministry and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the composition thereof, and
- (b) if the committee met prior to the decision taken for the culling thereof and, if so, when.

Mr Gobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Mauritian Fruit Bat is classified as a protected wildlife species under the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act 2015. It is a nocturnal mammal that roosts mostly in forested areas, particularly mountainous regions across the island.

The fruit bat population has increased over the years to reach an estimated figure of about 106,218 in 2019 according to a National Bat Survey undertaken in the months of November and December of 2019 by the National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) of my Ministry.

Under section 36 of the said legislation, provision is made for the setting up of a Special Technical Committee for the purpose of controlling wildlife in Mauritius.

As provided under section 36(2) of the said legislation, the Special Technical Committee may advise for control of any wildlife species, in the national interest, when the latter species has attained pest status.

As regards part (a) of the question, the composition of the Special Technical Committee is as follows –

- (a) the Director, National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) or his representative, as Chairperson;
- (b) the Director-General, Health Services or his representative;
- (c) the Conservator of Forests or his representative;
- (d) the Principal Veterinary Officer or his representative;
- (e) the representative of the University of Mauritius;
- (f) a representative of a non-governmental organisation involved in terrestrial biodiversity conservation, and lastly,
- (g) a member of the public with wide knowledge in biodiversity conservation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Special Technical Committee last met on 11 December 2019 and recommended that 10% of the total estimated population be controlled. The exercise was proposed for 2019 and 2020.

I am, however, informed that the control exercise was carried out on a smaller scale in specific sites in December 2019. Some 1,709 bats were controlled.

We are at a stage, as at now, Mr Speaker, Sir, where the relevant authorities are therefore undertaking a continuation of the said control exercise.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Despite numerous calls and appeals from the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation Bats Specialist groups and others, the Government is persisting to cull Mauritian Fruit Bats despite the fact that these bats are classed as endangered on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature list. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and its local representative which is the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation have been consulted prior to implement the decision of bat culling and if not, why not?

Mr Gobin: As I said, the recommendation to control 10% of the population comes from a recommendation from the Special Technical Committee which last met, as I said, in

December last year. The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation is indeed a member of that said Committee, in fact, very well known to me personally. And I know that the record showed that he, in fact, disagreed, of course, with the decision taken but the majority of the members present approved the recommendation to control 10%. We are therefore going along the recommendation of the Special Technical Committee.

As regards the red list of the IUCN, it is indeed still the case that the Mauritian Fruit Bat is on the red list of that IUCN entity. I am also informed that the Director of my Ministry's National Parks and Conservation Service is also a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Bat Specialist Group which is an expert group addressing the Fruit Bat Conservation issues and I am of the opinion that this is a matter to be taken at that level to decide whether the Mauritian Fruit Bat, having regard to the numbers I have just stated, should remain on that red list or not.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister agree that we are in breach of international convention if we are still persisting on this route of culling those, what we call Mauritian flying fox? Are we not in breach of international convention that we have signed to protect those bats which are endemic to Mauritius?

Mr Gobin: My answer is categorical, no, we are not in breach. I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, to state and the House will appreciate that there is a balancing exercise in this very delicate situation called human wildlife conflict. I have, under one hand, the preservation of the Mauritian Fruit Bat, I also have the preservation of the interest of farmers and the issue of food security. *Je comprends parfaitement les émotions que génèrent* a control exercise, but I would have wished Members of this House and the public to also share the grief of farmers when in some areas, according to official figures of the FAREI, up to 90% of fruits are destroyed during the fruiting season. So, my duty as Minister of Agriculture is, on one hand, to protect the wildlife but also to wipe a tear from the eye of a farmer.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Merci. Je suis très étonnée de la réponse du ministre parce que la Mauritius Wildlife Foundation a publiquement annoncé qu'elle n'avait pas été consultée.* But anyway, can the hon. Minister give the guarantee that the last culling was not done during the lactation and calving period of the bats, please?

Mr Gobin: If Dr. Vikash Tataya contacts me, I will give him the notes of meeting and then he will recall what was decided there.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

CAMP LA SAVANNE - HENRIETTA - BRIDGE

(No. B/789) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the construction of a bridge at Camp La Savanne, in Henrietta, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, Camp La Savanne comprising an agglomeration of several families situated near Henrietta, Vacoas and is separated from the main inhabited area of Henrietta by Rivière Papayes. The inhabitants of the region need to cross the Rivière Papayes, that is, a ravine of approximately 6 metres deep by foot or make a detour of approximately one km through a narrow single lane road to access their houses.

Accordingly, with a view to alleviating this hardship, Government undertook a project for the construction of a 48 metres long footbridge at Camp La Savanne oversailing Rivière Papayes.

The first project, Mr Speaker, Sir, was a footbridge, then the RDA decided to convert this footbridge to allow it to have vehicular access, at least, an ambulance or the two-wheelers and a bridge of 3.4 metres wide to allow the movement of pedestrians, two-wheelers, has been undertaken. The construction of the footbridge has been entrusted to the Road Development Authority for implementation through its approved framework agreement.

I am informed by the RDA that the cost of the construction of the bridge is Rs17.6 m. inclusive of VAT. Works started on site on 04 April 2019, my hon. friend, Nando Bodha, was then the Minister of MPI and, at present, the bridge is practically completed at 96% and is being closely followed by the PPS of the region.

The remaining works which include fixing of handrails on both sides of the footbridge, asphaltting, the approaches and construction of retaining walls thereat are expected to be completed within a period of one month. I am further informed that there has been a delay in the completion of the works due to the complexity of the foundation works which had to be redesigned as a result of extensive geotechnical investigations.

Moreover, in view of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the site was completely closed during the lockdown. The contractor is fully mobilised on the site and the project will

be completed by early December 2020. This has been a longstanding project, Mr Speaker, Sir, which now will be completed.

Ms Bérenger: *Merci. J'avais soulevé ce problème à l'ajournement de la session du 28 août dernier. Le ministre avait répondu qu'une solution avait déjà été trouvée.* Even if some workers suddenly came back on site since yesterday, can we know from the Minister what was the solution? Because works have not progressed at all since April.

Mr Hurreeram: I think I have replied already, Mr Speaker, Sir, we were in lockdown. I maintain what I am saying, the contractor is fully mobilised. This work has started on 04 April 2019, well before the elections, whatever be the matter being raised at Adjournment. My hon. friend, Nando Bodha, the then Minister of Public Infrastructure, did all they could, because for 20 years, this problem was outstanding, no one ever did anything. We needed to have this Government in power for this problem to be solved.

Mr Speaker: Hon Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. J'avais posé la même question le mardi 18 août 2020. Est-ce-que le ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre, si son ministère envisage l'installation des lampadaires solaires sur le pont pédestre pour assurer la sécurité des piétons de Camp La Savanne à Camp Mapou, entre autres? Merci, M. le président.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, when you have to eat an elephant, it is still one spoon at a time. So, let us complete the bridge and then we will look to the accessories.

Ms Bérenger: Merci. Pourrait-on avoir un *time frame*, quand peut-on s'attendre à ce que les travaux soient complètement terminés?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already replied that the contractor will complete the job by early December, second week of December, it will be completed.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PONT FER/JUMBO/DOWLUT ROUNDABOUTS – GRADE SEPARATED JUNCTIONS

(No. B/790) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the construction of the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer/Jumbo/Dowlut roundabouts, at Phoenix, he will, for the benefit to the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the –

- (a) length of the delay that occurred for the completion thereof;
- (b) amount of funds disbursed therefor as at to date, and
- (c) total final cost thereof.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank my hon. colleague for this question and luckily it came. My hon. colleague Dhunoo also had this question, but, unfortunately, he never had a chance to come.

The construction of the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer/Jumbo/Dowlut was awarded on 23 February 2018, for a contract sum of Rs1.4 billion inclusive of VAT, out of a total contract amount of Rs4 billion, which also includes the cost of the A1 M1 Link Road Project.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the works started on 06 April 2018 and the progress, as at date, is 71.4%. The contractual date for completion of the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer, Jumbo and Dowlut is 19 November 2020. However, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Mauritius, the works had to be stopped and consequently, the contractor had submitted claims for extension of time for the project. The engineer on the project, the Korean Expressway Corporation has assessed the claims following which an extension of time of 73 days without cost has been granted to the contractor. The revised contractual date for completion of the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer and Dowlut is, therefore, 03 February 2021.

I am further informed that the contractor has submitted other claims for extension of time pertaining to right of access and the post COVID-19 pandemic effect and these are being assessed by the engineers.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the amount of funds disbursed for the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer/Jumbo/Dowlut, as at date, is Rs823 m. inclusive of VAT.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the construction of the Grade Separated Junctions at Pont Fer, Jumbo and Dowlut Project is still ongoing and, as at date, the cost is within the budgeted amount. The total final cost of the project will be determined on its completion.

Thank you.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister has there been any additional claim; I mean, he informed the House that there has been claim for extension of time, but has there been any claims in terms of monetary terms?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been monetary claim, but these claims have been turned down by the engineer on the project.

Mr Ameer Meea: So, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can he give the guarantee to the House that the final cost would be as the original contract value, that is, Rs1.468 billion?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, this is the target, but, as I said, the final cost on the project will be determined on its completion, because, as at date, there are still a few plots of land on which there are some litigations happening and yesterday there was a hearing in Court. So if we happen to get a decision of the Court on time and there is no extension, so there would not be any. So, obviously, this is the target.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. In his original statement, the hon. Minister has mentioned that 73 days have been granted to the contractor because of COVID-19 belated claims. And can I ask the hon. Minister whether the latest claim that has been put by the contractor, which again includes COVID-19 and right of access issues, is different from what has been granted before? Because the contractor is claiming for COVID-19 a second time.

Mr Hurreeram: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not have any control on what the contractor will claim. They can claim whatever they want, we are not allowing. As I said, the engineer on the project has already turned down the claims. So, we have only allowed these 63 days.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PORT LOUIS - RING ROAD PROJECT - PHASES II & III

(No. B/791) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to Phases II and III of the Ring Road Project, in Port Louis, 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.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is presently undergoing a fundamental transformation in terms of road infrastructure. Government has embarked on the provision of

a strategic road network which is both fast and safe, connecting all parts of the island with a view to supporting the sustainable development of the country. As part of this endeavour, the Road Development Authority is currently executing nine major road projects totalling Rs5.5 billion and will implement 18 additional projects to the tune of about Rs5.2 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Phases II & III of the Ring Road Project form part of this strategic road development with its implementation plan in the long-term. The timing of implementation of this project will be determined by the impact of the following projects after their completion.

Firstly, the project of the Road Decongestion Programme, namely the construction of the great separated junction at Phoenix and the A1-M1 bridge over the Grande-Rivière-Nord-Ouest valley at Sorèze.

Secondly, the Metro Express Project.

And, thirdly, the decentralisation of Administrative offices and commercial activities from Port Louis to other regions.

Meanwhile, funding possibilities for the financing of the Ring Road Phases II & III are being explored.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this project is still on or has it been abandoned?

Mr Hurreeram: No, it has not been abandoned, it is still on. As I said in my reply, the funding possibilities are still being explored and there are some investments that have already been done, so, we want to wait and see what are the effects of those developments that have been done on the traffic. So, eventually, we will come with it when need be.

Mr Uteem: Can I ask the hon. Minister if Government decides to go ahead with this project, having received the finance, whether it will be the same alignment with the two tunnels as was announced previously?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, as at date, the alignment is the same.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister that last year, in 2019, in PQ B/309, the then hon. Minister gave exactly the same reply, that is, avenues for funding options are being explored and he mentioned at this time in the PQ about the funding from China, Korea Eximbank and Egypt. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any official request, any official meeting with those

agencies that were mentioned last year, or we are still at the same level where we were last year?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, my hon. colleague will appreciate that this project, Phase II and Phase III of the Ring Road will come to a cost of about 8.8 billion. So, it is all a matter of priority. As I said, we are currently investing in projects to the tune of almost Rs10 billion, so, we want to say what are the results being given by the current projects, and then, we will decide the way forward.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table is advised that PQs B/799 and B/807 have been withdrawn. Next question, Dr. Aumeer!

PACK AND BLISTER – VENTILATORS - PURCHASE

(No. B/792) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether in regard to the 50 ventilators purchased from Pack and Blister, he will state if same has now been received, indicating if –

- (a) they have been commissioned and, if so, when and by whom, and
- (b) same have been installed and, if so, where, indicating if they are ready for use.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/780)

BORDERS - PARTIAL OPENING - QUARANTINE FACILITIES

(No. B/793) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to inbound passengers having landed in Mauritius, since the partial opening of our borders on 01 October 2020 to date, he will state the number thereof –

- (a) indicating the number of –
 - (i) tourists, and
 - (ii) Mauritians who paid for their quarantine fees, and
- (b) having benefitted from free Quarantine facilities, indicating the eligibility criteria therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to PQ B/793.

As the House is aware, as from 01 October of this year, any traveller is free as a general rule, to come to Mauritius provided he conforms to the COVID-19 protocols in force in our country, including 4 PCR tests and mandatory quarantine of 14 days duration in a State-designated setting. These settings include designated hospitals, recreational centres and hotels.

The cost of accommodation on a full-board basis in hotels, designated by the State as quarantine facilities, is borne by the traveller. Non-Mauritian travellers have to pay an additional sum in respect of medical cost.

I am advised by the Passport and Immigration Office that the number of incoming passengers from 01 October 2020 to 05 November 2020 stands at 3,842.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that 801 passengers have travelled to Mauritius from 01 October to 04 November 2020 for the purpose of “holiday, vacation and visit.”

As to part (a) (ii) of the question, there were some 1,700 Mauritian citizens of which 1,590 paid for quarantine, including 19 persons who were offered, but refused free quarantine facilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as to part (b) of the question, I am advised that between the same dates, 01 October to 04 November 2020 that 110 persons have benefitted from free quarantine. Now, the qualifying categories are –

- Returning medical cases, including the accompanying party as validated by the Ministry of Health and Wellness;
- Mauritian citizens holding a valid return ticket issued on or before 20 March 2020;
- Mauritian students studying abroad with a scholarship from the State of Mauritius, and
- Other extreme hardship cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you hon. Deputy Prime Minister for your answer. Any reason why quarantine centres falling under the aegis of the Ministry of Health are not made available to Mauritians returning from abroad for just a nominal fee rather than the use of expensive hotels, among which some have been the focus fierce criticism as per their standard of service?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I would be grateful if the hon. gentleman could indicate which quarantine facilities of the Ministry of Health he is referring to?

Dr. Aumeer: The quarantine centres that have been enumerated during COVID-19. I will give you the list, just bear with me: the New Souillac Hospital, the Pointe Jérôme, the Anse La Raie, the Lady Sushil, the SSS Senior Citizens, these sorts of centres which are for the Government and which should be free, I suppose, for returning Mauritians.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I know these settings were not deemed appropriate for quarantine purposes, especially given numerous complaints received in the past. Everything has been put in place to offer returning passengers safe and comfortable conditions, abiding by the very strict sanitary protocol set in place by the Ministry of Health.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Dr. Aumeer: Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister consider home isolation, as it is considering for crew from Air Mauritius which prior to earlier in the session we had a question from one of my colleagues, to consider the use of electronic wrist band so that we can monitor the restrictive access as it is being used now in certain countries, and implemented for the crew and for Mauritians returning from abroad so that they do not have to pay that excessive price to stay in quarantine? Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir that is three questions in one: home isolation, bracelet and expensive cost of quarantine. So, I shall take with your permission, each one by one to provide the House with all information.

The approach of the State of Mauritius to combatting COVID is now a reference internationally. We are one of six/seven countries across the world that are COVID-safe, and of these countries, we are probably the country with the largest population. A distinctive trait or characteristic of our approach has been to say no by and large to self-isolation at home. Self-isolation at home tried in other countries that are now experiencing a second wave, has been far from conclusive, if I may be very kind in my choice of words. Now, therefore, the Government of Mauritius is not envisaging having recourse to a solution that has not worked elsewhere and will stick to the present formula that has saved our country from any case of local COVID contamination since 26 April, more than six months, and that is truly exceptional.

Secondly, the wearing of a bracelet, yes, we are exploring all possibilities, including wearing of bracelet to make double sure in terms of ensuring that persons do respect the COVID protocol where applicable.

And, thirdly, as regards the cost of quarantine, yes, it is not cheap, which is why Government has obtained from a banking institution possibility of loans up to Rs100,000, I believe, at 3% interest rate, repayable over a two and a half year period with a moratorium of another six months and, over and above that, we are providing as far as possible free quarantine, as I said, to different categories of persons. We are doing our best and we will continue trying to provide as affordable quarantine facilities as possible. For instance, in the recent past we have launched several expressions of interest, targeting smaller hotels, two-star hotels, guest residences, tourist residences, and I am happy to state that very soon we hope to have a couple of cheaper hotels offering cheaper packages on the MTPA list.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table is advised that PQ Nos. B/808, B/809, B/810, B/815 and B/816 have withdrawn. Hon. Ramful!

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILLAGE – LAGOON CLEANING

(No. B/794) 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 cleaning of the lagoon as a result of the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spillage, he will state the –

- (a) name/s of the contractors to whom the contracts therefor was awarded, indicating the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) number of –
 - (i) registered fishermen, and
 - (ii) skippers from the affected region, enlisted therefor, indicating the allowance paid thereto

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): M. le président, après l'échouement du MV Wakashio au large de Pointe d'Esny le 25 juillet 2020 et le déversement d'hydrocarbures survenu le 6 août 2020, quelque 30 kms du rivage sur le sud-est ont été touchés. Le nettoyage du lagon et des rives a d'abord été entrepris par diverses organisations du secteur public, à savoir le *National Coast Guard*, la *Special Mobile Force*, le *Living Environment Unit* de mon ministère, la *Central Electricity*

Board, le *Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services*, les collectivités locales, les différentes ONG et aussi les membres du public incluant les pêcheurs et les skippers des régions affectées. De plus, la compagnie d'assurance, Japan Protection & Indemnity (P&I) Club engageait les services de Polyeco Société Anonyme afin d'entreprendre, entre autres, le nettoyage et l'enlèvement des booms artisanaux saturés.

Vers le 10 août 2020, à la demande du *National Crisis Management Committee*, le Japan P & I Club et l'*International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Ltd (ITOPF)* ont été invités à élaborer un plan d'action pour le nettoyage des rives. Le 14 août 2020, en vue de la mobilisation de l'équipe d'experts pour l'exercice de nettoyage, le public a été aimablement informé par un communiqué de cesser le nettoyage des rivages.

ITOPF a présenté le plan d'action sur le nettoyage le 17 août 2020. Le plan d'action était fondé sur les relevés des rivages et comprenait, entre autres, la délimitation des zones de nettoyage, l'attribution des zones prioritaires, les techniques propres au site, les exigences en matière d'équipement et de personnel et la gestion des déchets selon un calendrier précis.

M. le président, suite à l'approbation du Plan d'action par le *National Crisis Management Committee*, Le Floch Depollution, désigné par le Japan P&I Club, a démarré les opérations de nettoyage à partir du 19 août 2020. Cependant, le 21 août 2020, mon ministère a envoyé une lettre au Japan P&I Club pour exprimer sa préoccupation et son insatisfaction à l'égard du rythme des opérations de nettoyage menées par ce dernier. Par suite de quoi, le 23 août 2020, Polyeco S.A. a également été désignée par le Japan P&I Club pour les opérations de nettoyage. Par conséquent, Le Floch Depollution a été affecté à la région de Rivière des Créoles jusqu'à Pointe du Diable et Polyeco S.A. de Blue Bay à Rivière des Créoles.

M. le président, le nettoyage est effectué selon quatre étapes, à savoir -

- (i) l'enlèvement des huiles usées accumulées/empilées et des booms artisanaux ;
- (ii) la collecte des débris contaminés, tels que les bouteilles en plastique, le bois et autres déchets généraux ;
- (iii) l'enlèvement des algues contaminées et le lavage et
- (iv) lavage sous pression des roches contaminées dans des conditions précises.

À ce jour, les opérations de nettoyage des différents sites sont à différentes étapes. Pour ce qui est de l'enlèvement des déchets, on m'informe que les deux entrepreneurs se sont entendus avec les entreprises locales pour le faire.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne les termes et conditions du contrat de nettoyage entre le Japan P&I Club et les deux entreprises mentionnées, la Chambre doit noter qu'il s'agit des accords privés. Selon les renseignements reçus des deux entrepreneurs, les modalités du contrat ne peuvent être divulguées.

M. le président, quant à la partie (b) de la question, je suis informé que le ministère de l'Économie bleue, des Ressources marines, de la Pêche et du Transport Maritime a effectué un paiement de R 1,564,800 à 504 pêcheurs des régions de Bambous Virieux, Grand Rivière Sud-Est, Mahébourg et Trou d'Eau Douce qui ont effectué le nettoyage du 10 août au 14 août 2020. Par ailleurs, selon Polyeco Société Anonyme, à partir du 16 août 2020, 71 pêcheurs enregistrés et 99 skippers ont travaillé avec eux pour le nettoyage.

Cependant, Polyeco S.A a informé que les termes de leurs accords et leur rémunération sont confidentiels. Quant à Le Floch Depollution, la compagnie nous a informée qu'il a sous-traité l'exercice de nettoyage avec la compagnie Maxiclean et selon les informations qui nous ont été communiquées, parmi il y a 5 pêcheurs, 18 pêcheurs non-inscrits, 1 skipper et aussi un 'bayant' qui sont parmi le personnel.

Mr Ramful: Thank you, hon. Minister. The reason why I asked this question is because initially during the different meetings that the Ministry of Marine Resources had with the fishers and skippers at Mahebourg and the regions, they were promised that all of the employees who would be recruited for the cleaning purposes would be recruited from the pools of fishers and skippers who come from the affected regions. Now, apparently, one of the companies is subcontracting the contract for cleaning to Maxiclean, and Maxiclean in turn is recruiting people from outside the region. Is there a possibility of your Ministry looking into the matter so that Maxiclean or the main company can recruit people from the affected region?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je dois dire que mon ministère et aussi le ministère de mon collègue de la Pêche ont eu plusieurs de travail avec les compagnies concernées et aussi la compagnie *ITOPF* qui agit comme *Advisory Body* en ce qui concerne le nettoyage. Nous avons émis le souhait et aussi demandé à ce que préférence soit donnée aux pêcheurs, aux plaisanciers et aussi aux propriétaires des bateaux pour qu'ils puissent être concernés avec toute l'entreprise de nettoyage. Donc, ils nous ont fait savoir qu'ils sont en train de faire de leur mieux à ce niveau, même en ce qui concerne le sous-contracteur qui a été employé, là aussi le message a été passé pour que préférence soit donnée aux personnes de la région.

Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, PQ B/813 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Members, I have to address the House concerning hon. Osman Mohamed. Earlier today, while putting a supplementary question in connection with PQ B/775, addressed to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, you purported to lay a few documents in support thereof. I have perused the said documents and it is noted that one of it is, in fact, a letter addressed personally to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and the other documents are directly linked to the subject matter of the said letter.

In the circumstances, the laying of documents which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister already has personal cognisance is not accepted.

Time over! I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes.

At 4.17 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.02 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please, be seated!

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.

Dr. Jagutpal seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE CLIMATE CHANGE BILL

(No. XIV of 2020)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Climate Change Bill (No. XIV of 2020).

Question again proposed.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Jagutpal!

(5.02 p.m.)

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am indeed honoured, privileged to take part in the debates on the Climate Change Bill.

It is interesting to note that even when the world is in the middle of an ongoing pandemic showing no sign of attenuation, debates in this House, unlike elsewhere around the world, are not limited to COVID-19 management and mitigation.

The sound management of the situation by the Government was, however, not as simple. Apart from the invisible enemy itself, we had to deal with all sorts of unfounded criticisms about flattening the curve, the known famous R NOTES and what not.

We are indeed blessed in this country to have at the helm of the Government a Prime Minister who has always been constant in his action. Our only prerogative consisted in protecting the health and the wellbeing of the population at all costs.

This Government's focus is now set on another crucial mission, that of attenuating, adapting to the drastic effects of another plight that is putting to peril our lives and livelihoods, that is, of climate change.

Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change that normally takes place over the course of hundreds of thousands of years have occurred during this last decade. 17 out of 18 warmest years the world has ever known have taken place after the year 2001. Climate change, however, is much more intricate and complex than just soaring temperatures.

Those of us who watched the documentary film entitled the Eleventh Hour, released by the former Vice-President and Nobel Prize Winner AL Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" would surely agree.

Our sea level rise over the last decade is 5.6 millimetres per year surpassing that of global average, that is, 3.3 millimetres per year. Cyclonic pattern in the region, this also is disrupted. There are less frequent cyclones, but more intense and devastating.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our country has been aggrieved by deadly effects of climate change on various occasions. The dramatic events which took place in Mon Gout in March 2008 are still vivid. The flash floods of March 2013 which paralysed our country, hitting the capital Port Louis and its neighbouring localities will also never be erased from our collective memory.

This Government has always placed the safety and wellbeing of the citizens as one of the highest priorities. We are not here to indulge in party politics, certainly not on such vital issues.

Today, while we are bringing such an important piece of legislation before this House, the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to go on a rant focussing on technicalities instead of coming up with constructive criticism.

The Wakashio situation, which is a matter of national concern, has been brought to this debate on climate change adaptation. We agree that this situation has considerable bearings on environment, but how is this incident related to climate change? It is, in fact, sad to note that, for some, Wakashio incident is just an excuse to indulge in demagogy.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that nothing has been done to address the question of climate change since 2015. He claimed that Climate Change Bill, before this House, is a copy-paste of measures devised in 2015. I remember the Leader of the Opposition said that my colleague, the Minister, has done nothing about this Bill and, at the same time, at a later stage, the Leader of the Opposition said also that the previous Government has done nothing. We don't understand. Is he watching a TV serial that we do watch at two o'clock in the afternoon? It is just like playing a TV serial. May be the Leader of the Opposition wishes to catch the eye of the Netflix team who is in Mauritius by making dramatic issues that will not work. It is clear that the opposition's aim is once more to instill confusion and doubts, but the TV serial we watch is for fun.

M. le président, comment oublier les accusations faites par un ancien ministre des Infrastructures Publiques en 2013 suite aux inondations qui avaient touché les villages de Fond du Sac, de Mapou et de Cottage dans le nord de l'île ? L'ancien ministre avait accusé le gouvernement d'avoir mis un terme à un *Work Order* pour la construction de drains dans cette région. Un mensonge qu'on a encore une fois essayé de nous mettre sur le dos. Ce ministre avait lui-même mis un terme à ce *Work Order*, et cela seulement 5 mois après avoir émis l'ordre de construction.

L'honorable leader de l'opposition notera qu'ici, il s'agit bien d'une catastrophe liée au changement climatique. Une catastrophe qui aurait pu être évitée mais certains avaient visiblement d'autres priorités. Aujourd'hui, heureusement, ces projets ont été complétés. La sécurité dans cette région a été rétablie et les habitants ne doivent plus avoir peur à chaque épisode de grosses pluies.

Je me souviens très bien de l'engagement de l'honorable Premier ministre, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, de mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Hureeram et du *PPS* Ramkaun afin que ce projet de drains soit exécuté de façon prioritaire.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Climate Change Bill is the realisation of yet another commitment binding this Government to the Mauritian nation. As clearly spelt out in the Government Programme 2020/2024, appropriate structures would be devised and made operational so as to identify and mitigate risks arising from global warming and climate change.

Here, I wish to congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for this Bill. It comes as a natural continuation of the various initiatives taken by his Ministry like "*Les Assises De l'Environnement*" and the meeting of the National Network for Sustainable Development.

Such initiatives, unlike what has been claimed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition last week in this very House, have indeed allowed the civil society and various other stakeholders to share their views on the question. I am confident that their proposals have been considered and included in the Bill.

The Climate Change Bill will also allow the country to fulfill its international commitments on various levels. It will also allow the establishment of specific structures aimed at making our country climate-change resilient.

The Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate change chaired by the Prime Minister will be a powerful tool that will drive our country towards achieving its objectives.

Mr Speaker Sir, climate change is a global health issue. The very fundamental determinants of health, like clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter are at stake. Studies conducted by the World Health Organisation suggest that between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause 250 thousand additional deaths yearly.

Even though the Mauritian health system boasts adequate primary, secondary and tertiary health care, we remain exposed to the threat of changing temperatures, sea level rise, cyclones, droughts and floods. Such extreme occurrences increase the risks of water-borne diseases and vector-borne diseases like dengue and chikungunya. They will also bring about emerging diseases which were up till now unheard of, for example, the Rift Valley Fever. Several cases have already been registered in our region.

The House will note that the Mauritian Government is already exercising a strict and regular monitoring of its evolution. The one Health Regional Network based at the level of the Indian Ocean Commission, allows us to anticipate further risks.

Climate change is also bound to lead to increased water and food insecurity. Extreme weather events might trigger the disruption of health systems and such calamities are also likely to cause weather related injuries and even mortality. Floods and extreme precipitation can contaminate freshwater supplies heightening the risk of water-borne diseases. They also create breeding grounds for disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes.

Poorer air quality is prone to affect the already vulnerable through diminished lung functions, increased cases of asthma and premature deaths. A rise in the country's disease burden is likely to generate higher health costs. It is therefore primordial to strengthen preventive measures in order to avert the disease burden related to climate change.

In the event of calamities such as cyclones and floods, a 24-hour watch is provided by the regional hospitals and the SAMU Emergency Service. The response to epidemics has been reinforced through the elaboration of a Contingency Plan in case of higher hospital attendance.

As for our trained personnel for highly contagious diseases, they have shown their worth and reliability as they are the ones currently involved in the contact tracing in the COVID-19 context. Vector surveillance and control activities remain ongoing throughout the year.

An integrated approach has also been adopted and it is based on an environmental management, focused on the elimination of breeding sites with the use of environmentally friendly larvicides and insecticides. The laboratory surveillance of diseases has also been uplifted.

My Ministry is working alongside the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation for the setting up of the DHIS 2 in Mauritius.

This District Health Information Software offers a web-based data sharing platform. Our ambition is to interconnect all existing public health centres within the Republic of Mauritius. This will allow the real-time monitoring of medical trends region by region.

My Ministry has also trained and is still in the process of training community officers who will go around the island, in towns, in villages, to educate and sensitise our nation.

Mr Speaker Sir, there is in fact an urgent need to gather adequate information on health impacts from climate change. Such data will help us to elaborate more appropriate health adaptation solutions.

The strengthening of the national technical and institutional capacity as proposed in the Climate Change Bill, will allow us to build resilience and reduce the health risks of climate change in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Health promotion through education, communication and dissemination of preventive strategies will also be boosted. The use of solar energy, rain water harvesting and natural aeration, which is already widely encouraged in future projects, should become the norm.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Climate Change Bill also includes a series of amendments to existing legal provisions. They aim to facilitate the implementation of strategies and the elaboration of policies, projects and programmes.

Native vegetation in coastal areas has a capital role in stabilising the surface against wind erosion and they also provide a habitat for wildlife.

I therefore welcome the proposed amendments to the Beach Authority Act so as to include in its mandate the restoration of native vegetation and the replenishment of public beaches.

As for mangroves, studies have shown that they have the ability to slow the movement of water and trap sediments thus preventing them from getting washed away.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposed amendments to the *Pas Géométriques* Act preventing any person to whom a lease has been granted from altering or changing any marsh, lake, sand dunes and mangroves on the *Pas Géométriques* will ascertain that these natural protections are preserved.

The same amendments have been proposed to the State Lands Act for any person granted a lease under section 6 of the Act.

These are, indeed, concrete measures aiming to safeguard our shorelines and protect our country's natural assets.

Once more, the leader of the Opposition was wrong when he stated that nothing has been done to protect our beaches.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as an island State, we will continue to remain vulnerable to climate change.

We will also remain subject to the failure to take action by the big polluters of the planet who, in spite of international commitments, often stray from the ratified objectives.

We can only rely on other island States and mainly on ourselves in order to plan for a better future for the next generations.

In order to succeed, we should work as one, set aside differences and petty considerations.

I will end by quoting the former American President Barack Obama who rightly stated that we are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.

I thank you for your attention.

(5.19 p.m.)

Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Merci, M. le président. M. le président, le *Climate Change Bill* est un projet de loi que nous attendions tous impatiemment. Ce projet de loi s'inscrit dans une mouvance mondiale des efforts de chaque Etat pour répondre aux enjeux environnementaux de notre époque. Ce sont les efforts conjugués de tous les Etats qui donneront un résultat et soulageront peut-être aux générations futures. Chacun a sa responsabilité dans la protection de notre environnement et dans la lutte contre le réchauffement climatique. Les gestes individuels sont nécessaires, mais pas suffisants. Il est, donc, indispensable que les Etats dressent les grandes lignes permettant la transition écologique.

Nous savons aujourd'hui que les émissions de gaz à effet de serre prennent entre 15 ans et 20 ans pour avoir un effet sur l'environnement. Ce qui veut dire que le réchauffement que nous sommes en train de vivre aujourd'hui, a commencé il y a 20 ans au moins. Ce qui veut aussi dire que les émissions qui ont lieu aujourd'hui, nous et nos enfants en subirons les effets dans 20 ans.

Nous avons déjà atteint un niveau sans précédent de 417 parties par million de CO₂ dans l'atmosphère aujourd'hui, ce qui n'était pas arrivé depuis des millions d'années. Il nous

reste 16 années de *carbon budget* pour renverser la tendance et les recherches actuelles suggèrent de plus en plus que la fameuse augmentation de deux degrés prévue pour 2050 est, en fait, déjà en train de se concrétiser. Deux degrés de plus, cela veut dire que la ceinture équatoriale deviendra hostile à la vie humaine, avec sécheresse, effondrement dans l'agriculture, etc., etc. Notre maison est en feu et si rien ne change, ma génération et celles qui suivront, ne survivront pas. C'est dans ce contexte que le gouvernement vient de l'avant aujourd'hui avec ce projet de loi.

M. le président, il est écrit –

“The main object of this Bill is to implement, with a view to addressing the adverse effects of climate change and developing Mauritius into a greener economy, the obligations of Mauritius under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and any other related instrument on climate change.”

Do we have a greener economy? The green economy is defined as an economy that aims at making issues of reducing environmental risk and ecological scarcities and that aims at sustainable development without degrading the environment.

With all the recent controversial projects that are going forward, despite the negative impact on the environment, we can say that we may have a grey or brown economy, but we certainly do not have a green economy. So, how can we talk about having a greener economy when we do not even have one? Maybe it is a joke and I just don't get it. In the preliminaries, we are told that an Action Plan is formulated under section 13, but it is not the case. There is absolutely no plan that is actually formulated.

M. le président, la définition même de climate change n'est pas complète. We want to address the adverse effects of climate change, but there is no mention at any time in this Bill of what are the effects of climate change. At least, can I ask that the House be provided with a policy brief on the principles, international norms and standards and national policy orientation that underpin this Climate Change Bill. There is no policy brief and this violates the norms, principles and standards of the Conventions, alors même que ce Bill est fait pour être en conformité avec les Conventions signées par Maurice.

La grande majorité de ce projet de loi, M. le président, se concentre sur une énième création de vague structure plutôt que l'action concrète. Il prévoit la création d'un conseil ministériel chargé de définir les objectifs, mais qui aurait dû être dans ce projet de loi, et ce

projet de loi aurait dû leur donner force de loi. 21 ministres sont supposés en faire partie. Le principal concerné, ministre de l'Environnement n'est pas mentionné. Comment peut-on créer un conseil interministériel sur le changement climatique, mais ne pas y inclure nommément le ministre de l'Environnement? J'espère qu'il s'agit là d'une simple faute. Par ailleurs, ce *Council* n'est-il pas similaire au *National Environment Commission* qui est déjà prévu dans l'*Environment Protection Act*? Quel aura donc été l'utilité du *National Protection Act*? Que peut-on espérer de plus de ce *Council*? A priori rien, puisque ces deux structures ont la même fonction.

Also, the terms of reference of the Council does not specify the frequency of inter-ministerial coordination meetings and there is urgency. Once again, we may be creating a new structure that will meet a couple of times just for a photo opportunity, but where there is no legal requirement for actual follow-ups.

A mon humble avis, ce conseil contribue à la création d'une structure trop lourde qui ralentira le travail plus qu'autre chose. La question de l'environnement et du réchauffement climatique doivent être une priorité et doivent être au cœur de toutes les actions gouvernementales. Puis-je ainsi suggérer que soit plutôt mis en place un *special Cabinet meeting*, comme cela fut le cas pour *Heritage City*, ou alors un comité parlementaire pour permettre un travail plus efficient, mais surtout plus transparent.

Ce projet de loi prévoit également la création d'un *Climate Change Department* au sein du ministère de l'Environnement, sauf qu'il existe déjà un *Climate Change Unit*. Qu'est-ce que ce *Climate Change Department* aura de plus que le *Climate Change* déjà existant? *How will it interface with other departments? 21 functional responsibilities are listed but without any enforceable and compliance mechanism.*

Et ce n'est fini. Le projet de loi prévoit aussi un *Climate Change Committee*. Ce comité sera composé de 33 représentants et on y trouve un seul représentant de la société civile qui aura, malheureusement, simplement le statut de consultant. Je suggérerai que le ou la représentante de la société civile ayant l'expertise requise ait un rôle plus actif dans les prises de décisions et également un droit de vote. Pareillement, ce comité vient ajouter une charge structurelle supplémentaire. Le danger est réel, car nous sommes dans une crise climatique où nous devons agir vite et bien. Or, selon la section 11 sous-section 4, le comité devra soumettre un rapport tous les deux ans pour faire part des projets effectués. Deux ans

c'est long, M. le président, et nous n'avons plus le luxe de pouvoir prendre notre temps. *And this is the only deliverable of this Committee.*

Also, the Environment Protection Act already makes space for a national sustainable development network for coordinating views, inputs from all stakeholders. What has been its usefulness to date, and what will be the difference with this Committee?

Dans son discours, le ministre a mentionné le fait que le gouvernement s'est inspiré de la Grande-Bretagne entre autres pour la rédaction de ce projet de loi. Dans ce cas, il aurait fallu aller au bout des choses.

It is important to note that, in the United Kingdom, the Climate Change Committee is an independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act of 2008 and this is what the MMM proposed in its last manifesto because the protection of the environment cannot depend upon the willingness of the actual Government and this Bill is very different from climate change legislation elsewhere. Here we do not have concrete measurable purpose and we do not know how to achieve the purpose. The Bill is focused on collecting and reporting on data and is focused on the structure.

Ce projet de loi vise aussi la création d'un *National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan* mais il n'y a aucun objectif chiffré, aucune échéance, ni aucune obligation de publication. Parmi les représentants chargés de la formulation des plans, on note principalement ceux des ministères. Ayant beaucoup entendu le ministre mentionner les *nature-based solutions* dans son discours et bien que celles-ci ne soient mentionnées nulle part dans le *Climate Change Bill* pourquoi ne pas inclure les experts en *nature-based solutions* justement. Ce serait faire preuve de bonne volonté plutôt que de se limiter aux belles paroles.

Mais au-delà de ça, encore et encore des plans, M. le président ; en 2012, il y a eu le *Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework* qui comprenait le *Climate Change Adaptation and Strategy Plan* adopté en 2013. Qu'est-ce qui a été fait depuis? Pourquoi la nécessité d'un nouveau plan d'adaptation qui coûtera encore de l'argent aux contribuables alors que nous sommes en 2020 et que le *Climate Change Adaptation and Strategy Plan* est prévu pour une durée de 10 ans. En 2013, il y a eu aussi le *Integrating Climate Change into the Coastal Planning and Management in the Republic of Mauritius*. En Mai 2019, il y a eu la *National Climate Change Adaptation in the Coastal Zone of the Republic of Mauritius*.

Cette stratégie n'a d'ailleurs pas été rendue publique et je souhaiterais demander au ministre de bien vouloir le déposer sur la Table de l'Assemblée.

M. le président, qu'en est-il de la mise en application de tous ces plans? Idem pour la formulation d'un nouveau *National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan* prévu par ce projet de loi, il existe déjà un *Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for Low Carbon Island Development Strategy for Mauritius*. En 2015, il y a eu le premier *Nationally Determined Contributions* où nous avons soumis comme objectif de réduire nos émissions de gaz à effet de serre de 30 % jusqu'en 2030. Entre 1999 et 2019, nos émissions de carbone ont pourtant doublé. Notre performance jusqu'à l'heure a été déplorable. Nous voudrions savoir comment est-ce que ce *Climate Change Bill* honorera notre *Nationally Determined Contribution*. Est-ce qu'il y aura un deuxième *Nationally Determined Contribution*? Aussi quel est l'objectif pour les énergies renouvelables dans la fourniture d'électricité pour 2040 et pour 2050? Si le projet de loi ne donne aucun objectif dans quels paramètres les différents comités et départements vont-ils travailler et quels sont les échéances pour que des objectifs soient déclarés?

Mauritius was one of the first signatories to the COP21 chartered in December 2015 and the energy transition is part of Goal 7. *Qu'en est-il du energy transition programme?* What are the steps that you are going to take? This is what we want to hear.

Comment allez-vous empêcher nos émissions de carbone? Comment allez-vous responsabiliser les pollueurs? Allez-vous imposer une taxe carbone? Nous sommes dans le flou. Des rapports nous avons à en revendre, M. le président, mais c'est leur mise en application qui se fait attendre. Dans la partie sept on vient amender sept autres lois sauf qu'il semblerait que les amendements nécessaires quant aux *interpretations* aient été oubliés.

For instance the Beach Authority Act will be amended to enable replenishment of beaches but I am not sure how this will be achieved when neither the ensuing amendments nor climate change itself are defined in the Beach Authority Act, empty words again.

The *Pas Géométriques* Act will be amended in section 7 by inserting after subsection (1), the following subsection, and I quote -

(1A) A person to whom a lease is granted under subsection (1)(a) shall not alter or change any marsh, lake or sand dunes and mangroves of the Pas Géométriques.

But marsh, lake, sand dunes are not defined and these provisions are already mentioned when granting EIA licence and have not stop the alteration or change of sensitive areas.

Et comment cette clause interagira-t-elle avec le *Wet Land Bill* qui est supposément en phase de finalisation. Les amendements aux sections 16 et 18 de l'*Environment Protection Act* sont positifs car ils apportent des garde-fous additionnels. Cependant, les conditions pouvant être imposées par le directeur de l'environnement ou le ministre lui-même représentent une porte ouverte à la corruption ; une invitation à demander des “*bals couler*”. Cette ouverture au népotisme, au favoritisme est malsaine. Je suggère donc qu'autant de liberté ne soit pas donnée au directeur ou au ministre lui-même.

Je regrette également que l'*Environment Protection Act* ne soit pas amendé pour y inclure l'évaluation environnementale stratégique comme suggérée par les O.N.G. lors des Assises de l'Environnement car les *Environment Impact Assessments* (EIA) ne peuvent évaluer les impacts cumulatifs et interconnecter d'autres activités dans une même région.

Les amendements au *Tourism Authority Act* sont malheureusement aussi élémentaires alors que nous parlons là d'un des piliers de notre économie qu'il nous faut aujourd'hui également transformer pour pouvoir attirer des touristes qui sont de plus en plus conscients et responsables, écologiquement parlant.

Enfin, selon la section 26, les ministres et autres autorités, qui auront fauté, ne pourront toujours pas être tenus responsables de leurs erreurs. Où est le principe d'*accountability* pourtant indispensable à la bonne santé de notre démocratie et qui a d'ailleurs fait l'objet de plusieurs rassemblements et de plusieurs manifestations à travers l'île ces derniers jours? Nous devons des comptes aux électeurs et électrices et aux Mauriciens, aux Mauriciennes en général.

Je pense que cette section n'a aucune raison d'être et devrait être enlevée. Je ne reviendrai pas sur la section 27 et la culture d'opacité que souhaite entretenir le gouvernement à travers cette section parce que le Leader de l'Opposition en a déjà fait mention.

M. le président, comme je disais plus tôt la situation est alarmante, nous devrions être en état d'urgence environnementale depuis des années. La partie VII vient amender quelques lois mais, en réalité, nous avons une cinquantaine d'autres lois qui ont trait à l'environnement. Donc la partie VII vient amender certaines lois mais pas d'autres ce qui amène une certaine confusion.

D'ailleurs, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, for instance, is not mentioned, yet the only two mentions of disaster risk reductions in the Bill are about the composition of the many committees to be set up. Instead of doing a piecemeal patchwork, I think that our Constitution should be amended to include the duty of care to safeguard the health and vitality of natural ecosystems for the benefit of the environment and human wellbeing. This will enable any citizen to act according to law, to protect the environment without having to justify a direct or personal damage.

Aussi il faut bien le reconnaître il n'existe pas de loi parfaite pouvant répondre à toutes les situations. Il existera souvent des lacunes dont certains finiront toujours par tirer profit. Mais un tel amendement constitutionnel obligerait d'une part le législateur à tenir compte des menaces qui pèsent sur notre environnement lorsqu'il fait des lois et contraindra, d'autre part, le pouvoir exécutif à être plus conscient de ses limites en lui donnant la conscience du long terme et en lui imposant le respect des principes fondamentaux de la protection de l'environnement.

Par exemple, le ministre ne pourrait pas exempter certains projets du permis EIA comme nous avons pu le voir dans le cas du Metro Express. M. le président, permettez-moi de soulever quelques autres lacunes de ce projet de loi et par la même occasion de faire quelques suggestions.

This Bill makes no mention of sustainable development goals of subscribing to the objectives and adhering to and localising the targets and indicators. No mention as well of a Sendai framework on disaster which is underpinned by a gender equality and human rights based approach.

Aucune mention n'est faite non plus quant à ce qui sera mise en œuvre pour assurer l'éducation au changement climatique. L'éducation est pourtant un catalyseur du changement. Il est essentiel de permettre à toutes les couches sociales d'avoir accès aux informations sur le changement climatique d'une part et d'autre part de développer la conscience écologique de nos enfants afin qu'ils puissent ensuite devenir des citoyens écoresponsables et qu'ils aient un rôle actif dans la lutte contre le réchauffement climatique.

Pour cela, je suggérerais que ce sujet fasse partie du cursus scolaire. D'autant plus que les études montrent que le changement climatique affecte les plus vulnérables en premier et les enfants et les femmes en font partie malheureusement de par les facteurs socio-économiques et culturels.

Un expert des Nations Unies pour les droits des enfants avait d'ailleurs posé la question en janvier 2015 à la délégation de Maurice quant aux dispositions prises par notre pays par rapport au changement climatique. La réponse malheureusement ne pouvait que se résumer à des solutions à court terme telles que des repas fournis aux enfants démunis lors des calamités.

Un *Climate Change Bill* devrait impérativement tenir compte de ce facteur et inclure des solutions sur le long terme et quand bien même l'on sait que les femmes et les enfants sont les plus affectés, ce projet de loi mentionne le mot '*gender*' de façon très cosmétique.

Gender issues are subsumed and relegated under research despite the fact that there has already been a Gender Assessment and Programme-Level Action Plan in the Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Indian Ocean programme.

Je demanderai donc que le gouvernement fasse preuve de bon sens en s'y référant et en s'assurant que les femmes aient leur place dans les instances de prise de décision car étant le plus apte à proposer des solutions qui les concernent. Et dans cette même optique, M. le président, qu'en est-il de la justice climatique? Pas un seul mot n'y est consacré. Est-ce que ce projet de loi vient responsabiliser ceux qui polluent le plus et qui sont aussi les mieux lotis face aux conséquences du réchauffement climatique? Qui pollue le plus selon vous entre celui qui dort à la belle étoile, car sa structure a été démolie pendant le confinement, et celui ou celle qui roule en berline et qui dort dans l'air conditionné?

Il faut être conscient de ses privilèges et du fait que ce sont les plus démunis qui polluent le moins mais qui subissent en premier les conséquences néfastes du changement climatique. L'étude de Chancel and Piketty intitulé '*Carbon and Inequality: From Tokyo to Paris*' atteste de ce fait.

Et que ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique choisisse d'ignorer cette réalité, lui fait perdre son sens premier. Dans la même lignée, les éventuels réfugiés climatiques sont donc aussi les oubliés de ce projet de loi. Combien de familles sont-elles à risque? Où seront-elles relocalisées? Et mis à part Rodrigues, pourquoi ce silence pesant concernant nous autres îles et leurs habitants qui sont tout autant concernés par les conséquences du réchauffement climatique?

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, il aurait fallu une discussion sur ce projet de loi d'un point de vue communautaire. Ce *Climate Change Bill* nous concerne tous mais nous ne sommes pas tous concernés de la même façon comme je viens de l'expliquer.

Qu'il s'agisse des jeunes, des femmes, des pêcheurs, des plus démunis, aucune des composantes les plus concernées et touchées par les conséquences du réchauffement climatique n'ont été consultées et pourtant, ce sont les mieux placés pour conseiller sur le sujet car ayant la connaissance nécessaire de par leur situation, de par leur besoin. Et il est d'ailleurs fortement regrettable que les travaux des Assises de l'Environnement ont été totalement ignorés. Il faut reconnaître et valoriser la connaissance locale et régionale.

This Bill should be proposed by Government but should be driven by our people. Il s'agit là d'un sujet qui nous dépasse et les débats devraient aussi dépasser cette Assemblée et cela aurait été l'occasion de sensibiliser sur le sujet du réchauffement climatique, de galvaniser, de dynamiser l'action collective et de mettre l'emphase sur l'urgence. J'espère que le gouvernement saura remédier à ce manque de consultation honnête.

M. le président, ce n'est plus un secret pour personne, les arbres sont nos meilleurs alliés dans le combat contre le réchauffement climatique car ils absorbent le dioxyde de carbone. Mis à part le fait que des milliers d'arbres continuent d'être sacrifiés pour faire place au béton, selon le professeur Vincent Florence, il ne nous reste que 2% de nos forêts. Uniquement 5% de ces 2% sont en train d'être restaurés. 95% de ces 2% sont en train de dépérir à cause des espèces envahissantes. Notre biodiversité ne va pas bien et c'est d'ailleurs une des raisons pour laquelle les chauves-souris sont en train d'envahir nos jardins.

Qu'est-ce que ce *Bill* prévoit pour la restauration de nos forêts afin de nous aider dans notre combat contre le réchauffement climatique? Je propose que nous fixions ici l'objectif d'augmenter notre surface de forêt indigène de 10% d'ici 2030. C'est très raisonnable.

Enfin, M. le président, je comprends que l'idée même derrière ce projet de loi est de bénéficier de l'aide financière internationale en étant en conformité avec les conventions internationales signées par Maurice. Mais mis à part cela, comment le gouvernement compte-t-il concrètement financer ce qui est prévu dans ce projet de loi? D'où proviendra l'argent? Et quand bien même nous arriverons à trouver le financement nécessaire, encore faut-il que cela aille dans les bonnes actions, autrement dit dans la décarbonisation d'une part et dans la protection et la restauration de l'environnement d'autre part. Mais ceci n'est pas précisé dans le projet de loi.

Et si nous continuons avec nos habitudes actuelles lorsque nous n'aurons plus de poissons dans nos lagons, plus de terres fertiles pour cultiver notre nourriture, plus d'arbre

pour nous donner de l'ombre et des fruits, plus d'air saint à respirer, plus d'eau pour vivre, que ferons-nous de cet argent?

Pour conclure, M. le président, l'idée d'un *Climate Change Bill* est bien accueillie mais le contenu nous laisse sur notre faim. Ce projet de loi s'apparente à une coquille vide. Une coquille éclate quand il y a une pression extérieure mais quand la pression vient de l'intérieur, il y a la vie. Le *Climate Change Bill* devrait amener cette substance intérieure parce que nous avons besoin d'un souffle nouveau, pas juste pour nous mais pour ceux et celle qui viendront après nous.

Mais ce projet de loi manque clairement de vision et d'ambition. Il se focalise sur la structure plutôt que la substance. Nous devons le voter pour être en conformité avec les conventions internationales signées par Maurice mais le cœur n'y est pas.

M. le président, tout au long de mon discours, je n'ai pas seulement fait des critiques, j'ai aussi fait des propositions concrètes telles que rajouter dans le projet de loi les sujets définition manquantes, permettent aux représentants de la société civile d'avoir un rôle actif, d'adopter l'évaluation environnementale stratégique, de définir les objectifs et échéances, de développer nos stratégies, de focaliser sur l'action, etc., d'amender la Constitution, de créer une institution indépendante pour assurer la protection de l'environnement.

J'espère que le gouvernement ne tombera pas dans la démagogie en disant que l'opposition ne fait que critiquer et ne propose rien. Peut-être par orgueil parfois, il choisit trop souvent de n'entendre que les critiques et d'ignorer les propositions.

À travers les différentes propositions des députés de l'opposition, le gouvernement a l'occasion de prouver sa bonne volonté mais encore faudrait-il qu'il croit dans l'utilité de ce projet de loi et soit sincère dans sa volonté de le mettre en application. Car toute référence à la biodiversité ou aux écosystèmes dans ce projet de loi apparaît comme une mascarade, lorsque l'on sait que quelques semaines avant de présenter celui-ci à l'Assemblée, des permis sont alloués pour permettre des développements sur des zones sensibles qui mériteraient pourtant d'être protégées.

How will the coast of Mauritius cope with the effects of climate change if we continue destroying our blue carbon assets? Blue carbon is key in the fight against climate change and one that is directly relevant to us in Mauritius. If the ecosystems are degraded or damaged, their carbon sink capacity is lost and adversely affected and the carbon stored is released resulting in emissions of carbon dioxide that contribute to climate change. As told by

David Attenborough, “there is one overriding principle. Nature is our biggest ally and our greatest inspiration” to adverse effects of climate change. We just have to do what nature has always done. In this world, species can only thrive when everything around it thrives too.

Le ministre de l’Environnement a donc non seulement le devoir, mais aussi et surtout le pouvoir de protéger notre patrimoine écologique et d’éviter la destruction des écosystèmes. "La folie est de toujours se comporter de la même manière et de s'attendre à un résultat différent", comme dit Einstein. Nous devons donc absolument rompre une bonne fois pour toutes avec les mauvaises pratiques. S’il n’y a pas de changement radical, il n’y aura pas d’avenir pour ma génération et les générations qui suivront et ce projet de loi dans sa forme actuelle est une insulte à notre jeunesse. D’ailleurs, le *National Youth Environment Council* n’est même pas mentionné dans ce projet de loi. Et ici, M. le président, j’aimerais faire appel aux jeunes de l’autre côté de la Chambre. Indépendamment de nos divergences politiques, ils ont mine de rien; entre leurs mains, le destin de notre génération et de celles qui suivront. Qu’ils saisissent cet opportunité pour inverser les cours des choses, sinon à quoi bon être de l’autre côté de la Chambre si c’est pour regarder notre avenir et celui de ceux et celles qui viendront après être détruits sans rien faire, car que ce soit clair, M. le président, rien ne changera mis à part le climat si nous ne changeons pas notre modèle de développement, la manière dont nous gérons nos ressources et notre rapport à la nature.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhaliah!

(5.50 p.m.)

Mr R. Dhaliah (Second Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for this opportunity given to me to bring my humble contribution to the debate on such a vital piece of legislation dealing with the complex issues of climate change, which does not affect only the Republic of Mauritius, but the whole world. Climate change is not merely a national issue, but it transcends all borders across the globe. This clearly gives an idea of the scale and the magnitude of the challenges ushered in by climate change.

I wish to commend hon. Ramano, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for having introduced this Climate Change Bill in this august Assembly at this opportune time, when the calls for protection of the environment is high on the agenda of this Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government, under the able stewardship of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, has been elected on 08 November 2019, and we just heard about the bilan of *un an*, with a clear mandate and on the basis of its programme to take the Republic of Mauritius to new heights and with the aim of further improving the quality of life of our citizens. We have a visionary Prime Minister who has the leadership, the courage and the determination to rise to challenges and face the future with confidence. His vision to address the numerous challenges, among others and presently that of climate change can be testified by the very fact that when the portfolio for the Ministry of Environment was being established, he included that of climate change in that very organisation.

In addition, the Government Programme has clearly spelt out this Government's firm commitment to deal with the climate change issue expeditiously. This is clearly enunciated at paragraph 157 and 158 as follows, I quote –

“157. Government believes in the urgency of action on climate change. It is about creating the mechanisms for fundamental change and mitigating climate change disruptions and protecting the future generations.

158. A High Level Inter-Ministerial Council will be set up to identify and mitigate risks arising from global warming and climate change. A new Climate Change Bill will be introduced.”

Once assuming Office in November 2019, this Government started implementing the measures pledged to the nation in its electoral manifesto and a number of those measures have already been completed. This Bill is yet another milestone; it would have been presented much earlier had we not faced the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

M. le président, nous débattons aujourd'hui d'un projet de loi très important, car avec le reste du monde, Maurice fait face à des défis sans précédent en matière de changement climatique. Il sera en cours et parfois, inflexible. A l'échelle mondiale, le changement climatique augmentera les risques existants, notamment la propagation des maladies, les menaces à la sécurité alimentaire et les perturbations sociales. Ces dangers auront des répercussions mondiales, pèseraient gravement sur les infrastructures publiques essentielles et entraîneront des pertes sociales, écologiques et économique sans précédent.

Malheureusement, M. le président, notre égoïsme, notre avidité et l'absence de considération pour l'environnement ont eu raison de la nature, et aujourd'hui nous subissons

les conséquences du changement climatique qui engendrent de nombreuses catastrophes. Lorsque ces crises se produisent, qu'il s'agisse d'inondation ou de cyclone, nous déclarons une situation d'urgence et nous mobiliserons les ressources nécessaires pour y répondre.

M. le président, il n'est pas alarmiste de suggérer que le changement climatique est lui-même une urgence. C'est la force causale qui fait augmenter la fréquence et la gravité de chacune de ces autres crises. Nous avons aujourd'hui une lourde responsabilité qui repose sur nos épaules. Il est de notre devoir de rétablir la nature dans ses droits. Nous devons réagir en nous posant à nous-mêmes la question concernant l'héritage que nous voulons léguer aux prochaines générations. La COVID-19 nous force à porter des masques pour nous protéger d'un virus. Mais voulons-nous être condamnés à l'avenir à porter en permanence des masques pour nous protéger des conséquences néfastes d'une industrialisation irréfléchie et mal planifiée, d'une déforestation à outrance ou encore de nos actions qui ont fait de la terre une déchèterie? Non, M. le président, nous ne pouvons pas dire que nous ne savions pas ou qu'on ne nous a pas dit. L'urgence climatique à laquelle nous sommes actuellement confrontés changera notre façon de vivre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are already witnessing the effects of climate change. The planet has so far been able to regulate itself to some extent. Protecting the nature today is becoming a *sine qua non* condition if we want to safeguard the planet from the devastating effects of climate change. Here, I would avail of this opportunity to highlight the prevailing global climatic situation. The emission of carbon dioxide has reached a record high of 55.3 gigatonnes in 2018. The period 2016 to 2019 was the warmest on record with an average global mean surface temperature of 1.1 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial era. 11% of all global greenhouse gas emissions goes by humans are due to deforestation. Roughly 3.2 billion people are currently impacted by land degradation. Some 800 million people representing 11% of world's population are currently vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods, heat waves, extreme weather events and sea level rise. The coastal blue carbon ecosystems are critical. Only 0.7% of the world's forests are coastal mangroves. These mangroves are capable to storing 10 times as much carbon per hectare as tropical forests. According to reports, some 800,000 hectares of mangroves are lost every year. If this trend prevails, the mangroves may disappear within the next century. This loss shall potentially remove an important buffer from extreme weather for coastal communities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we also need to take stock of the current situation at national level. According to the World Risk Report 2020, Mauritius is ranked 53rd in terms of highest

disaster risk. Nonetheless, we remain highly exposed to natural hazards. In 2019, the total greenhouse gas emissions for Mauritius accounted for some 0.01% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Our temperature records revealed a warming trend of around 1.2 degrees Celsius and it is slightly above the global average temperature rise of 1.1 degrees Celsius.

The sea level rise witnessed over the last decade is of the order of 5.6mm per year and it surpasses the global average rise of 3.3 mm per year. The accelerated pace in sea level rise is causing severe coastal degradation and salt water intrusion.

According to the United Nations report 'SIDS in numbers 2017', Mauritius is vulnerable to becoming a water stressed country by 2025 and its agricultural production could potentially decline by as much as 30% by 2050. In addition, the availability of utilizable water may drop by 13% by 2050.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the figures I have just mentioned provide a backdrop of the magnitude and complexity of climate change challenges going forward. Both on the international and national fronts, we have to remain '*avant-gardiste*' and resilient to tackle the situation and other unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, we endure the twin crises of COVID- 19 and climate change worldwide. The pandemic has exposed systemic vulnerabilities and inequalities that threaten the basis of sustainable development. The fight against the COVID- 19 pandemic is still not yet over. European countries and the United States are already enduring the effects of the second and third waves. France, Germany and the UK have already instituted another lockdown. Fortunately, in Mauritius this Government has through its relentless efforts and its fights against COVID-19 been able so far to contain the pandemic. It is not yet over and we have to remain on our guards and continue to take all necessary precautions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as we look forward in terms of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic we must commit to transform our economy, energy and health systems to save lives, create stable inclusive economies and starve off the existential threats of climate change. Mauritius has signed and ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 10 June 1992 and 04 September 1992 respectively.

On 09 May 2001, Mauritius has also acceded to the Kyoto Protocol which became operational as from 16 February 2005. On 22 April 2016, Mauritius ratified the Paris agreement which is considered to be a landmark agreement and a key milestone to combat climate change effects. This agreement became in force on 04 November 2016.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as Mauritius is a party to these agreements and conventions, we have as a responsible Government the obligation to ensure their implementation. This Bill will no doubt help to establish the necessary legal framework towards making Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country. It will also lead our nation into a greener economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now I will highlight some of the main provisions contained in this Bill. Clause 9 of this Bill provides for the setting up of an inter-ministerial council on climate change to be chaired by the hon. Prime Minister. This in itself testifies the high level commitment and leadership of the Prime Minister. I wish to congratulate the Prime Minister for his firm commitment, determination and engagement in the fight against the adverse effects of climate change. The mandate of the council which comprises no less than 21 Ministers is to set national objectives, goals and targets with a view to making Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country. Besides the council, this Bill provides for the establishment of Department of Climate Change, to be headed by a director. In addition the Bill makes room for a Climate Change Committee comprising of officials of public sector organisations, a representative of the private sector and the civil society. This Bill further provides at clauses 13, 14 and 15 for the formulation of a National Climate Change Adaption Strategy and Action Plan; for a National Climate Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan and for a National Inventory Report. These strategies and action plans which will contain also timelines together with a national inventory report will be in accordance with the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, Paris agreement and other related bodies working on climate change. The order is tall but not insurmountable.

Another important provision made in this Bill pertains to the legally mandatory requirement for every Government Department to carry out public consultations for the purpose of developing strategies and policies in respect of climate change. This Government believes in collaborative and participatory approaches when developing strategies and policies on subject matters of public interest and national importance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we cannot speak of the development of the Republic of Mauritius without mentioning Rodrigues and the outer islands. This Government has made the solemn pledge with regard to the sustained development of Rodrigues and the outer islands in the Government Programme 2020-2024. The more so, that Rodrigues Regional Assembly has taken a number of initiatives to promote sustainable development.

Paragraph 182 of the programme reads as follows, I quote -

“The sustainable development of Rodrigues and the outer islands with due regard to their fragile ecosystems will remain at the heart of Government agenda.”

The commitment of the present Government is clearly demonstrated by the recent visit of the hon. Prime Minister to Rodrigues last month on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the autonomy of the island, and second, by the fact that Rodrigues has not been left out in this Bill. Provisions have been made at clauses 4(3) and 20 to 23 of this Bill to take on board the development of Rodrigues as far as climate change is concerned.

Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 14(4) of the Bill provides for the national climate change mitigation strategy and the national climate change adaptation strategy together with their respective action plans to be reviewed every five years or at such time as the Minister may determine. I believe that updating of the strategies and plans every five years is consistent with the reporting schedule followed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This updating exercise will ensure that each of the plans is made on the basis of the most up-to-date international peer-reviewed science and best practices. One has to consider the pace at which new and cleaner technologies are coming to the market and the dynamics of the emerging low carbon global economy. At the same time, we cannot be certain of the pace and scale of economic change, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on a concluding note, the provisions contained in this Bill are vital to address environment and climate change challenges. They reinforce the strongly positive and progressive spirit of this novel legislation. They maintain a sharp and proactive political focus on developing and implementing national climate change policy. The call for action on climate change is more pressing than ever. It has been estimated that it will take around USD 140 billion per year to make changes humanity needs to adapt to a warming world. It may sound astronomical, but it actually represents less than 0.2% of global GDP. The cost will only surge the longer we take to act ambitiously.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is among the Small Islands Developing States and we are all aware of the vulnerable condition led in by climate change. We are a minor significance in the greater human drama that is unfolding around us. But what we do has an importance proportionate to size. We can never shirk our responsibility to contribute to the common good, which means the good of humanity. If we fail in our duty to support this important legislation on climate change, we shall not only condemn our children to a miserable and

precarious life but shall have also committed a new crime, that is, the crime of global negligence.

We, on this side of the House, do not want to go down in history for global negligence on climate change. This Bill is far beyond party politics and, as responsible Members of Parliament, we have a moral responsibility and duty towards our country and the generations to come. This will be an important legacy we will leave for future generations. I, therefore, fully support the Bill.

Long live the Republic of Mauritius!

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. François!

Mr J. F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Thank you.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to speak on the Climate Change Bill (No. XIV of 2020). On 12 December 2015, I witnessed and supported the Paris COP21 Agreement, a first-ever, historical, universal, legally binding and global climate change agreement for climate justice.

One phrase that strikes my mind during the Conference was, and I quote –

“If we save Tuvalu Island, we are saving the world.” Unquote.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to understand and address climatic change, there are a number of principles and elements. Allow me to refer to Article 2 subclause 1(a) of the Paris Agreement, and I quote -

“in enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by - limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5° Celsius by 2100, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.” Unquote.

With this Bill today, our Republic is among the few small number of countries in the world to produce a Climate Change Bill and I congratulate the hon. Minister and his team for the work

done. “Climate change success will only depend on political will and climate crisis is a moral issue”, stated Vice-President AL Gore at COP21.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I put on record, and remind the House of the remarkable jobs done in Paris by the Mauritian delegation comprising of Her Excellency Mrs Gurib-Fakim for the High Level Meeting of Heads of State; hon. Sinatambou and for the Conference of Parties for High Level Segment - hon. Dayal, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; His Excellency Mr Rault, Ambassador in Paris and his second secretaries; Mrs Echevin, President of MCCI; Mr Jadoo, Permanent Secretary; Mr Seewoobaduth, Divisional Environment Officer of Climate Change Division and myself, PPS for Rodrigues.

Our delegation laid emphasis –

- (i) firstly, on the challenges being faced by the Alliance of Small Islands Developing States (AOSIS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as well as developing countries in Africa;
- (ii) secondly, expectations in terms of the outcome, on long term temperature goal of 1.5° C, mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, capacity building, technology development and transfer with science and innovation, and transparency of actions, and
- (iii) thirdly, support required by Mauritius from developed countries to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change while pursuing sustainable development and poverty reduction goals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the IPCC 2018 - Global Warming of 1.5°C, Special Report for COP24, the Secretary-General, António Guterres, stated that “Climate change is moving faster than we are and we must listen to the earth’s best scientists”.

During my response to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (No. II of 2016), I stressed that it was high time for the introduction of a Climate Change Bill in our legislation to achieving climate change outcomes.

I am glad that this Bill is being placed at the heart of our national policies and priorities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now, I come more specifically to the essence of this Bill, which is to establish a legal framework towards making the Republic of Mauritius a climate-change resilient and low-emission country.

This Bill reinforces and implements our Republic commitments and obligations under the Paris Agreement enhanced in our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

As pointed out, an updated NDC for our Republic as per the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change is now expected to be submitted before COP26, in November 2021 in Glasgow UK.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our position to international obligation, based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, has been crucial, since COP21, in support to our NDC requiring financial support of 5.5 Billion US Dollars for mitigation and adaptation measures up to 2030.

So, can we say, since our ratification of the Agreement that our Republic is consistent enough to meet our target of 30% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2030?

Yet, I note that a series of measures have been adopted, amongst others: the strengthening of the drain system by the NDU and the Land Drainage Authority, as widely canvassed by hon. Minister Hurreeram.

Hon. Ramano rightly mentioned a few legislations introduced at the National Assembly, I will add another important one, the Mauritius Research Innovation Council Act, to meet Clause 8 subclause (2) (h) requirement for research relating to climate change.

This Bill will provide a framework for adaptation and resilience development, where concerned authorities shall ensure that all new infrastructures in our Republic undergo a Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment.

I expect this Bill to fully promote eco-friendly practices as per clause 30(B), and also encourage our policies, to improve infrastructure efficiency to include tighter building standards, with possibility of preferential and subsidised finance.

With regard to Clause (11) – National Climate Change Committee, I propose that a representative of each of other professional Councils of Registered Surveyors, Planners and Architects, to form part of the Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change represents one of the biggest threats to sustainable development. I reiterate my wish for our Parliament to set up an SDG Standing Committee to undertake effective oversight of SDGs implementation to achieve the 2030 Agenda despite most countries are lagging behind. Fiji Parliament, as a SIDS, is making significant progress in that direction. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already set up its SDG Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Republic should not undermine climate change and its implications on our rescue, defence and national security. We all have witnessed the sad episodes of the MPA Tug-Sir Gaëtan and MV Wakashio, when rescue and assistance missions entrusted to our special services became impossible as a result of unadapted equipment to face extreme climate events. Thus, as per Clause 8 subclause (2) (o), our services require resilient equipment and regional cooperation, around climate and security issues.

The impact of climate change on our ocean is already visible and is increasing, such as corals bleaching, rise in sea level and loss of marine diversity, sufficiently canvassed. Allow me, to extrapolate to Rodrigues on some specific measures targeting the ocean that can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as setting up of a Marine Protected Area for conservation of vulnerable marine habitats that have high ecological and biological value and mangroves plantations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a sustainable and integrated Wastewater Management System, especially for Rodrigues, shall be included in our National Updated NDC for COP26. Rodrigues pursues its objective to combat plastic pollution through regulations made for banning on all single-use plastic bags and disposable plastic food items. Now, my question relates to, what is the audit situation of aquatic waste in our Republic? There is need to intensify ocean-climate research, mainly on acidification, intrusion of sea-water along our coastal region, and the socio-economic impacts of climate change on our land, lagoon and deep-sea ecosystems. In that direction, Rodrigues can and shall become an Excellent Climate Change Research Laboratory.

Mr Speaker, Sir, recently, hon. Balgobin, and a delegation from MRIC, were in Rodrigues, to discuss avenues for research and applied research in Rodrigues. I am pleased to note that the hon. Minister responded proactively with a token of Rs5 m. to establish a special scheme for research for Rodrigues, as I raised during debates on the MRIC Bill last year.

Now, I will relate to some specific clauses of the Bill to Rodrigues. Mr Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues ecological vision is on the move. The Executive Council led by the Chief Commissioner Serge Clair has a strong political will and public support, for a cleaner, greener and ecological Rodrigues Island.

In the Explanatory Memorandum, this Bill, which provides, in as far as Rodrigues is concerned that –

- (a) the Commissioner for Environment in Rodrigues shall be responsible for the formulation of climate change strategies and ensure that climate change measures are effectively and efficiently implemented and maintained in Rodrigues, and
- (b) there shall be a Rodrigues Climate Change Committee which shall, *inter alia*, collaborate and coordinate with the Climate Change Committee for the preparation of reports related to climate change.

This Bill provides, at clause 20 for a Rodrigues Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan for Rodrigues and clause 21 – the setting up of a Rodrigues Climate Change Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now, allow me to make some proposals for amendments of the Bill with regard to Rodrigues –

- a. At clause 21, paragraph (1) (e) –to delete the letter ‘a’ and to replace it by the words ‘at least one’ with regard to representative of non-governmental organisation, to be appointed by the Commissioner.

This will cater for more committed NGOs in Rodrigues such as Shoals Rodrigues, Mauritius-Rodrigues Wildlife Foundation, *Terre-Mer*, *Association des pêcheurs et Planteurs*, Rodrigues Youth Council, Rodrigues women Council amongst others, in the spirit of Participatory Democracy for our Civil Society.

In the Fifth schedule, I propose to add a representative of the Mauritius Research Innovation Council - Rodrigues Office and the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA), and the private sector network in Rodrigues specially the Tourism Sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the areas of responsibility being exercised by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, as per section 26 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, as defined in Schedule 4, shall be amended to add the subject matter - Climate Change.

Furthermore, Clause 4 (3) of the Bill shall be amended to add that “the Commissioner Responsible for Environment and Climate Change”, may, at the request of the Prime Minister, attend any meeting of the Council, or simply to form part of the Council. Why not?

In the context and spirit of the autonomy of Rodrigues, as entrenched in section 92 of the EPA 2002 Act, clause 29 Regulations subclause (3) of the Bill shall be amended for

practical reasons with regard to the functionality and powers of the Commissioner responsible for environment or climate change.

Thus, clause 29 (2) of the Bill, shall also provide for RRA to make Regulations applicable for Rodrigues, not only the Minister.

Clause 30 - consequential amendment for practical reasons, especially, with regard to section 90 subsection (1) of the EPA 2002, shall be amended to cater for the Commissioner responsible for the subject environment as Vice-Chairperson of the Rodrigues Environment Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose that the Regional Assembly establish a full-fledged Rodrigues Climate Change Division.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues is still aiming to shift towards the use of cleaner energy through its 100% renewable energy use vision. Mitigation measures and contribution as supported by various UN organisations such as GEF, UNDP, WHO, through the smart use of resources is on the right track, with regard to the setting up of Marine Protected Area, desalination projects, octopus season closure, reducing in lagoon fishing exploitation and a smart agriculture aiming towards zero fertilizer and 100% bio-agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of adaptation in Rodrigues, actions are being taken through various projects, namely rainwater harvesting, no development on sand dunes, water resources management, coastal zone management and protection of beaches, namely at Grand Baie and Petite Butte as identified by the ICZM Committee of Rodrigues.

Through NDU, as PPS for Rodrigues, I have recently completed some major drains projects at Camp Du Roi, Rivière-Cocos, Grand La Fouche Mangles, Oyster Bay amongst others and ongoing major drains projects are at Port Mathurin-Phase 2 and Baie Malgache, and in the pipeline soon, raising of '*radiers*' at Anse Ali and Port Sud Est.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in as far as the evolution of meteorological parameters over Rodrigues is concerned, with data from Meteo Service Rodrigues, I am informed that –

- (a) Sea level rise - Analysis based on tide gauge data from Port Mathurin - as compared to world trend of 3.3mm/year, shows a rise of about 6.4 mm/year during the period 1987-2019, and compared to mainly Mauritius which is 5.6mm/year as stated by the hon. Minister. The rise was more significant in the last 10 years and is found to be about 6.7 mm/year.

- (b) Temperature shows an increased trend in line with global trend. Over the last 69 years (1951-2019), warming of about 1.13 degree Celsius, compared to baseline 1961-1990 is observed. An accelerated warming is observed as from 2009. The last decade (2010-2019) is found to be about 3 times warmer than the previous decade between 2000 and 2009.
- (c) Cyclone - the number of storms reaching intensity of tropical cyclone or higher is on the increasing trend over the Indian Ocean basin. This has made Rodrigues more likely to be impacted by more intense storms.
- (d) Indeed, during the cyclonic season of the last ten years, Rodrigues has been influenced by 15 storms. Out of these, one was a tropical cyclone and seven were intense tropical cyclones.
- (e) Mean annual rainfall over Rodrigues shows an increasing trend over the last 30 years. This amounts to about 90 mm per year. The number of short duration heavy rainfall event is also increasing, leading to an increase in flash flood events. However, I will add that right now, Rodrigues is relatively very dry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose that the Ministry shall organise at the national level an Annual Green Republic Conference, which will become a platform for climate change information exchange.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before concluding, I put on record that, right after my participation in COP21 Paris, I organised in Rodrigues a first Climate Change Campaign Awareness in collaboration with the Regional Assembly and the Rodrigues Council of Social Service, involving all the presidents and the environment responsible persons of all the village communities.

The theme of the campaign was : *“Agir Ensemble Contre le Changement Climatique - la Planète Terre, l’Urgence Climatique, et Rodrigues - Notre Pays, Notre Avenir, une Prise et un Réveil de Conscience.”*

M. le président, l’environnement, l’écologie et le changement climatique s’inscrivent en lettres majuscules dans l’agenda politique de l’OPR. Nous voulons faire de Rodrigues incontestablement une île écologique et un exemple pour la République et le monde entier. Et j’ajoute, que Rodrigues continue sa réflexion pastorale de notre Évêque le Mgr Alain Harel sur le thème – *«Nou la Terre, Nou Trésor, Nou Responsabilité vers Enn l’écologie intégrale»*.

De plus, je suis heureux de constater que les jeunes de Rodrigues sont très attentifs aux questions climatiques et à l'environnement en général, donc je fais un appel patriotique pour «*ki Zot Alle Encore Pli Loin* ».

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me conclude, by saying that this Climate Change Bill is a catalyst of change that will build a prosperous economy for a greener and resilient Republic of Mauritius which, exponentially, will contribute to advance our SDGs Agenda 2030.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us all speak with one voice, let us all overcome our differences as a Nation and act for Climate Change, to fulfil our ambitions, so that we can rise to the challenge before us, as we decide on our future, with ambition, equity and action. Here I have to say that I am on the same line of the proposals made by hon. Joanna Bérenger for a constitutional definition, as is the case in the South African 2018 Bill and a Climate Change Education Programme for a New Culture, and we can benchmark on the Australian model.

This Bill will create a new green citizenship and community where each and every citizen of our Republic, and especially our Youth, must sign a National Pledge to act for the Climate.

Je termine avec ce proverbe Indien que j'aime bien, et je cite –

« La Terre n'est pas un don de nos parents, ce sont nos enfants qui nous la prêtent. »

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

(6.31 p.m.)

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal): M. le président, il est un fait que la planète se réchauffe de manière accélérée et dangereuse et que nous sommes en état de crise climatique ; aucun doute que le retard sera difficile à combler, mais l'espoir est toujours permis.

En effet, le changement climatique est le principal responsable de la multiplication des catastrophes naturelles dans le monde. Tout comme la pandémie du Coronavirus, le changement climatique n'épargne personne et aucune région. Comme cela a été souligné lors du dernier sommet du *SIDS (Small Island Developing States)* des Nations Unies aux îles Samoa, les Etats insulaires sont les plus vulnérables car ils doivent affronter des tempêtes de plus en plus dévastatrices, des montées du niveau de la mer et des sécheresses des rivières, entre autres. Comment oublier le tremblement de terre du 26 décembre 2004, déclenchant un tsunami ravageur dans l'Océan Indien, considéré comme un des pires cataclysmes des temps

modernes qui a frappé au large de l'Indonésie, les côtes du Sri Lanka, le Sud de l'Inde et l'Ouest de La Thaïlande et qui a entraîné sur son passage environ 250,000 morts.

En octobre 2019, l'ONU a alerté que les désastres naturels ont tué plus de 1,2 millions de personnes depuis l'an 2000. C'est une bonne chose que Maurice ait signé l'Accord de Paris sur le Climat qui a d'ores et déjà été ratifié. C'est aussi très important que la population dans son ensemble et surtout les étudiants et les ONG soient informées sur le contenu de cet accord et comment Maurice va tirer avantage. Je propose que le ministère de l'Environnement prenne les devants car l'accord prévoit aussi des subventions pour aider les pays membres, surtout vulnérables à surmonter les défis.

Les récents propos du docteur Vikash Tatayah, directeur de la conservation au *Mauritius Wildlife Foundation*, lors d'une interview sur le site lemauricien.com en date du 16 octobre 2020 interpelle. Il a dit, je cite –

« Nous sommes la troisième île la plus dégradée au monde. »

Ce constat fait réfléchir. Certes, pendant trop longtemps l'environnement a été relégué au second plan dans notre pays. Pas de doute que la situation est grave, surtout après l'échouage de MV Wakashio dans le Sud-Est de l'île avec son lot de critiques, un déchainement de colère et le désordre environnemental que cela a entraîné, c'est clair que l'inquiétude est légitime.

En 2008, le gouvernement Parti travailliste/PMSD avait introduit un projet visionnaire, le concept 'Maurice Ile Durable' (MID). Malheureusement, avec le changement de régime en 2014, le projet fut enterré. Résultat, nous sommes aujourd'hui dans une situation d'échec.

M. le président, à mon avis, face au changement climatique, il faut impérativement ouvrir le débat qui, trop souvent, est limité à des considérations d'ordre technique et économique. Les décideurs politiques parlent surtout de deux mécanismes, c'est-à-dire, l'atténuation et l'adaptation, mais rarement de son impact sur les différentes composantes de la population qui restent encore sous-exploitées dans le débat alors qu'il revêt d'une importance capitale. Dans ce projet de loi, il y a certes quelques efforts, mais cette loi engage-t-elle toute la société ? Va-t-elle profiter à tous ?

M. le président, le dérèglement climatique est l'affaire de tous et pour lutter contre le réchauffement de la planète, toute la population doit y participer. Sommes-nous préparés à lutter contre les impacts négatifs du changement climatique ? Le premier volet de mon

intervention repose sur les femmes et le changement climatique. Puisque plus de 52% de notre population est composé de femmes et de filles et si l'on veut atteindre l'objectif de l'Accord de Paris sur le Changement Climatique, et limiter le réchauffement bien au-dessous de 2 degrés Celsius, il est clair que sans l'implication des femmes et des filles nous y parviendront jamais. Nous ne pourrons réussir qu'ensemble. Il ne faut oublier personnes.

Le ministre de l'Environnement a fait mention dans son discours que cette loi sera *Gender responsive*.

J'espère très sincèrement qu'il ne s'agit pas encore d'un nouvel effet d'annonce, comme c'est souvent le cas.

Il est essentiel que les besoins des femmes tout comme ceux des hommes soient inclus dans l'action climatique afin de créer des solutions équitables et durables, surtout si nous rêvons d'une république écologique. Il est impératif d'aborder des lois et des stratégies transversales et agir pour une meilleure protection de l'environnement. Les femmes n'ont pas nécessairement les mêmes points de vue que les hommes sur le climat ni d'ailleurs les mêmes comportements.

Je voudrais profiter de l'occasion qui m'est offerte ce soir pour rappeler aux membres de l'Assemblée nationale que, pour l'instant, les femmes ne sont pas suffisamment représentées dans les débats sur les changements climatiques dans notre pays. Pourtant les changements climatiques ont un visage féminin. Les bouleversements climatiques nous concernent tous. C'est aussi une affaire de femmes, surtout que les femmes sont aux premières loges des impacts lors des inondations, sécheresses, tsunamis, cyclones et j'en passe.

Vous êtes-vous déjà posés la question, mesdames, messieurs les ministres et députés : qui émet le plus de dioxyde de carbone, l'homme ou la femme? Savez-vous que des chercheurs de plusieurs pays se sont penchés sur la question et leurs conclusions sont sans appel. Un homme émet en moyenne par jour 39,3 kilogrammes de dioxyde de carbone; une femme seulement 32,3 kilogrammes, c'est-à-dire qu'une femme émet 20% de moins de dioxyde de carbone qu'un homme. Ces résultats expliquent, entre autres, que les hommes consomment plus de viande rouge et conduisent plus vite des voitures souvent plus puissantes que les femmes; donc, ils émettent davantage de dioxyde de carbone.

M. le président, les femmes sont les premières victimes du changement climatique mais elles peuvent aussi agir comme des agents du changement et contribuer de façon

efficace à la promotion des méthodes d'adaptation et d'atténuation du réchauffement de la planète. Je voudrais faire quelques suggestions pour donner un coup de pouce aux femmes face aux changements climatiques. Je recommande que les différents comités, qui seront créés sur les changements climatiques, soient plus largement représentés par des femmes professionnelles et non des nominées politiques qui ne comprennent rien à l'écologie. Je propose que le gouvernement finance la formation des femmes sur l'économie de l'énergie, sur la gestion de l'eau et l'assainissement, et la conservation des aliments car il est un fait que les femmes maîtrisent mieux que personne ces ressources dans leurs foyers respectifs.

Je suggère aussi de conscientiser les femmes sur les différents systèmes d'alerte et je propose d'enseigner les femmes, surtout en raison de leurs responsabilités familiales, sur le choix de consommation durable au quotidien; les soins de santé des enfants et leurs activités domestiques surtout dans l'utilisation des objets ou produits polluants qui ont des effets directs sur l'environnement.

Le combat contre le changement climatique et l'effet de serre peut aussi représenter une aubaine pour l'entrepreneuriat, surtout parmi les jeunes et les femmes. Je propose d'encourager les foyers à se doter des panneaux solaires et des mini-turbines à vent comme c'est le cas en Australie et en Scandinavie ; un encouragement qui doit entraîner des abattements fiscaux.

On pourrait aussi encourager les jeunes et les femmes à faire l'assemblage des *solar kits* ou des *wind turbines* et de les vendre à la population. C'est une démarche qui va non seulement créer de l'emploi mais aussi réduire notre dépendance sur l'importation des produits pétroliers pour générer l'énergie.

Le deuxième volet de mon intervention, M. le président, porte sur les *seniors* et le changement climatique. En général, les *seniors* ont plutôt le geste responsable car ils consomment moins de viande rouge et achètent plutôt des produits locaux. Les *seniors* s'assurent toujours d'avoir éteint tous les appareils électriques avant de se coucher. Cependant, le changement climatique peut avoir un effet encore plus brutal sur les *seniors*. Il faut donc s'assurer que les droits de nos *seniors* soient protégés dans tous les cas de figure. Le réchauffement climatique et le vieillissement de la population sont de grands défis que nous devons impérativement relever. Les conséquences du changement climatique sont en effet néfastes sur la santé de nos aînés en raison de leur âge et de leur condition physique.

En cas de catastrophe naturelle comme les pluies torrentielles, l'inondation, sécheresse, etc., la vulnérabilité des personnes âgées est bien réelle, M. le président, car elles ont souvent des difficultés à entendre ou voir et ces conditions peuvent réduire leur accès à l'information et leur discernement en ce qui concerne la gravité du danger.

La canicule affecte principalement les *seniors*. Avec l'été qui s'annonce plus chaud et plus sec particulièrement cette année, il faut protéger nos personnes âgées. Je propose une grande campagne de sensibilisation indiquant les médicaments à éviter et les précautions à prendre en période de forte chaleur.

Enfin, M. le président, le troisième volet de mon intervention concerne les personnes en situation de handicap et le changement climatique. Le changement climatique est une menace majeure pour les personnes en situation de handicap. En effet, ces personnes sont confrontées à des difficultés spécifiques et les questions qui s'imposent sont: comment nos concitoyens en situation de handicaps visuel, auditif, mental ou moteur pourront-ils évacuer les lieux lors d'un tsunami, lors d'une inondation ou de cyclone? De toute évidence, ces personnes auront du mal à accéder au secours.

Les personnes en situation de handicap qui habitent dans les régions pauvres sont trop souvent exclues des plans de préparation en situation d'urgence. Je voudrais faire quelques suggestions, entre autres: fournir des informations lors des catastrophes naturelles. Cela demandera au préalable de mettre en place un registre des personnes en situation de handicap par région. Je propose aussi d'assurer l'assistance des personnes en situation d'handicap et de mettre à la disposition de ces personnes des refuges avec porte accessible aux malvoyants et non-voyants et aux personnes à mobilité réduite.

Avant de conclure, M. le président, je dirai que le gouvernement doit aussi venir de l'avant avec une stratégie claire sur l'adoption des énergies renouvelables et la diminution de notre dépendance sur les fossiles fuels.

Actuellement, tout se fait en parcimonie, *piecemeal approach and not holistic*, comme on dit en anglais.

Quelle est la stratégie du gouvernement sur l'adoption des voitures électriques ou transport en commun? Pas besoin d'aller loin pour voir la fumée que dégagent les camions et autobus sur nos routes.

J'aimerais aussi informer les membres de la Chambre que, pour le prochain cycle de financement de l'Union Européenne vers les pays en voie de développement, l'Union

Européenne a annoncé récemment à travers sa présidente, Madame Ursula Von der Leyen, qu'ils viennent de l'avant avec le *green deal*, c'est-à-dire, le pacte vert résolument tourné vers le changement climatique. Je laisse le gouvernement prendre le soin d'étudier le contenu et voir comment Maurice peut tirer avantage.

Notre planète est au bord du chaos climatique mais nous avons encore les moyens de la sauver. Pour réussir, il faut se concentrer sur l'essentiel, déterminer les priorités de Maurice dans la lutte contre les changements climatiques et mettre en place des organismes transparents et indépendants. Tout dépendra si nous serons à la hauteur pour élaborer des Plans d'Actions qui parviennent à renforcer la résilience sociale. L'exemple d'une île écoresponsable vient de Rodrigues qu'on surnomme affectueusement la Cendrillon des Mascareignes qui a pris de l'avance sur nous puisqu'elle a su bannir les sacs en plastique et contrôler la gestion des pêches, entre autres. Ayons un peu d'humilité et inspirons nous de notre petite sœur.

Pour conclure, M. le président, je dirais qu'au niveau national des efforts devraient être engagés pour intégrer la problématique des femmes, des seniors et des personnes en situation de handicap dans les politiques et les stratégies nationales ainsi que dans les projets liés au développement durable et au changement climatique.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

(6.50 p.m.)

Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): M. le président, c'est pour moi un privilège de m'adresser à cette auguste Assemblée en faveur du projet de loi sur le changement climatique.

Je voudrais commencer par remercier le Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, ainsi que le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Gestion des déchets solides et du Changement Climatique, l'honorable Kavi Ramano, pour avoir porté ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique à la table des débats.

M. le président, le programme gouvernemental 2020-2024 est axé sur une île Maurice verte, inclusive et à haut revenu. Le gouvernement s'est engagé à adopter une politique de développement responsable et écologique durable. Pour assurer la durabilité et l'investissement responsable, le gouvernement est prêt à relever le défi. Investir dans

l'énergie claire, passer à une île Maurice plus propre et plus verte, atténuer les risques liés au changement climatique et protéger nos ressources marines. L'objectif principal de ce projet de loi est de tout mettre en œuvre en vue de lutter contre les effets néfastes du changement climatique et d'adapter Maurice dans le cadre de la convention des Nations Unies sur le changement climatique, du protocole de Kyoto, de l'accord de Paris et de tout autre instrument connexe sur le changement climatique.

En conséquence, le projet de loi établi un cadre juridique visant à faire de Maurice un pays résilient au changement climatique et à faible émission en prévoyant entre autre la mise en place d'un conseil interministériel sur le changement climatique, un département spécialisé sur le changement climatique qui développera des programmes politiques et des Plans d'Action et coordonnera la recherche sur le changement climatique.

M. le président, ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique fait aujourd'hui l'objet d'un débat dans cette auguste Assemblée afin de mobiliser l'ensemble des pouvoirs publics, les acteurs privés et la société civile pour que l'adaptation soit reconnue au même titre que l'atténuation et que nous comprenions le défi que cela implique. Le *Climate Change Bill* nous propose un plan national d'adaptation qui touchera les secteurs de l'eau, la santé publique, l'infrastructure, la protection des zones côtières, l'agriculture et la pêche entre autre.

Le changement climatique est la plus grande menace à laquelle nous sommes confrontés mais il est bon, M. le président, de souligner que le changement climatique est un phénomène qui ne date pas d'hier. Cela fait au moins 300 ans que l'on en parle. Dès le 18^{ème} siècle, les scientifiques avaient compris que les activités humaines pouvaient dérégler la météo, mais à chaque siècle, son interprétation. Au 16^{ème} siècle, on parlait de l'arme de Dieu. A l'époque, pour organiser au mieux labour, semailles et moissons, les paysans se fiaient au dicton météorologique. Ces formules s'appuient sur des siècles d'observation. Pour le commun des mortels de l'époque, ces dérèglements sont des avertissements divins. Je cite –

« Le ciel a envoyé contre nous pour punir notre ingratitude une intempérie étonnante. »

Et l'on raconte justement, au 17^{ème} siècle un évêque nommé Jacques Bénigne Bossuet qui disait : 'Que faire contre Dieu, réfléchir, réfléchir et réfléchir'. Au 18^{ème} siècle, ce phénomène interpelle les scientifiques. Dans les académies des sciences à Paris, Londres ou Florence, on se lance dans l'étude du climat. Il n'y a plus du tout de printemps, peu d'automne et pour l'été quelques jours par ci par là. Au 18^{ème} siècle, c'était en 1719, Montesquieu lance par

voie de presse des appels aux savants pour participer à son projet d'une histoire de la terre ancienne et moderne dont l'objectif était de reconstituer l'histoire naturelle, géographique, géologique et climatique de la planète en mettant l'accent sur l'effet des changements fait des mains d'hommes qui ont donné une nouvelle face à la terre. Et si l'activité humaine modifiait le climat, le projet n'aboutit pas, mais la graine avait été semée.

Au milieu du 18^{ème} siècle, le naturaliste français, Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon remarque qu'une seule forêt de plus ou de moins dans un pays suffit pour en changer la température et prend l'exemple des modifications du climat en Guyane après l'installation des européens. Hélas, on pense alors que la déforestation est bénéfique puisqu'elle permettrait de réchauffer les températures. Mais la chronologie d'une prise de conscience mondiale du changement climatique commence en 1827. Joseph Fourier utilise le terme 'effet de serre' pour la première fois en 1827 pour décrire la rétention partielle dans l'atmosphère des radiations solaires.

En 1958, Keeling s'aperçoit vite que ce gaz à effet de serre se répartit uniformément dans tout endroit de la terre, et ne reste pas confiné aux seuls continents industrialisés. Le taux en dioxyde de carbone (CO₂) ne cesse de croître.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes en 2020. La lutte contre le changement climatique est une priorité mondiale et les mesures nécessaires pour limiter son ampleur par la baisse de nos émissions de gaz à effet de serre et l'atténuation du changement climatique est l'affaire de tous. Nous souffrons de voir les océans pollués de sacs plastiques, les rivières devenues des dépotoirs, les poissons en voie de disparition, les animaux sauvages en perdition, les ours polaires esseulés sur un bout de banquise qui fond, les baleines exterminées, les abeilles qui trépassent, les énergies chimiques qui nous empoisonnent à petit feu, l'air pollué qui nous rend malade et j'en passe. Et si nous jetons un regard sur la région, M. le président, nous pouvons observer une importante élévation du niveau des mers dans l'océan indien avec des différences régionales notables. L'érosion côtière relève de la convergence des impacts du changement climatique et du mal développement de l'habitat de des activités côtières propre à occasionner des dégradations environnementales.

Les pays de l'océan indien présentent des écosystèmes aux caractéristiques communes. Dans cette région du monde, les moyens de subsistance et les économies sont fortement dépendant des ressources naturelles que mettent en danger les changements climatiques mais aussi des problèmes majeurs de développement comme, la pauvreté, la

sécheresse, les inondations, les dégradations environnementales, entre autres. Les écosystèmes marins et côtiers sont particulièrement vulnérables aux changements climatiques, blanchiment des coraux, élévation du niveau des eaux et sédimentation des mangroves, inondations, érosion des terres côtières. Ces impacts croissants affectent les moyens de subsistance et la sécurité alimentaire, économique, physique des 30 millions de personnes vivant dans la région de l'océan Indien et pire, l'engloutissement de certaines îles à l'instar des îles Salomon.

Dans ma circonscription, la saison des pluies et des raz-de-marée arrivent bientôt et déjà, les habitants de Rivière des Galets craignent pour leur sécurité. Déjà, le niveau de la mer ne cesse de monter dans cette partie de la côte sud. En effet, M. le président, lors des gros averses, il y a des accumulations d'eau et la marée envahit des habitations longeant la côte où le niveau d'eau s'élève jusqu'à plus d'un mètre dans certaines maisons. Et si vous prenez en compte tout cela, M. le président, vous comprenez pourquoi lorsqu'on parle des conséquences du changement climatique, on n'est pas seulement confronté à quelques défis écologiques majeurs, nous devons également nous préparer aux conséquences sociales et politiques potentielles qui découlent des mauvaises récoltes, du manque d'eau et des inondations, entre autres.

Des décennies de recherches scientifiques nous disent sans le moindre doute possible que nous, les humains, sommes les responsables directes de la survenue et de l'accélération du changement climatique, et que si nous ne prenons pas dès aujourd'hui des mesures courageuses pour sortir d'une économie axée sur le carbone, nous serons exposés pour notre habitat à des dommages irréversibles ainsi qu'à nos infrastructures, notre production alimentaire, nos réserves d'eau, le niveau des mers et potentiellement, la vie elle-même. Nous n'avons certainement pas besoin d'être de grands scientifiques pour voir que notre climat est déjà en train de changer. Pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, nous avons eu la visite d'un anticyclone qui a fait chuter considérablement la température de la moyenne saisonnière. Nous ne savons ce que nous devons faire; cela se résume par deux autres mots, atténuation et adaptation.

L'atténuation c'est de s'attaquer aux causes du changement climatique en réduisant ou en arrêtant les activités humaines qui affectent le système climatique, par exemple, en réduisant nos émissions de gaz à effet de serre. La plupart des émissions proviennent de la façon dont nous produisons et consommons de l'énergie, de la conduite de nos voitures, de la fabrication de produits, les électroménagers, téléviseurs, et j'en passe. Nous pouvons réduire

nos émissions en devenant plus éco énergétiques et en optant pour des carburants renouvelables ou à faible émission de carbone.

L'adaptation c'est apporter des changements pour se préparer, réduire et annuler les effets du changement climatique, par exemple, en renforçant les défenses maritimes pour réduire la vulnérabilité des communautés côtières. D'autre chose que nous pouvons et devrions faire maintenant, qu'on prenne la réduction de la consommation d'eau en réduisant les fuites et en étendant le comptage domestique, éviter tout développement inutile dans les plaines inondables ou sur les côtes à érosion rapide et la conception d'infrastructures qui résistent aux conditions météorologiques les plus extrêmes. C'est la raison pour laquelle il est plus qu'urgent de ratifier et de mettre en place ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique.

Comme nous l'a dit le ministre Ramano, l'Ile Maurice est classée 53^e pays avec le risque de catastrophe le plus élevé, mais toujours très exposé aux risques naturels. C'est pour vous dire, M. le président, que les observations des paramètres du changement climatique deviennent alarmantes.

Un rapport sur le climat récemment publié par le Conseil de droits de l'homme des Nations Unies donne un aperçu des défis futurs. Un précédent rapport sur les changements climatiques et la pauvreté publié en 2019, a été rédigé par Philip Alston, le rapporteur spécial sur l'extrême pauvreté et les droits humains. Ce rapport attire l'attention sur l'impact disproportionné et dévastateur du changement climatique sur les personnes vivant dans la pauvreté. Les deux rapports soulignent que les gouvernements se doivent d'agir dans l'extrême urgence et bien. Le droit international relatif aux droits humains peut déjà offrir les outils utiles pour prévenir et réparer les injustices climatiques.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, d'aborder un autre aspect qui me tient à cœur. Quand on parle de changement climatique, il s'agit du changement climatique et la pauvreté. Ceux qui vivent dans la pauvreté et ceux qui se situent juste au-dessus du seuil de pauvreté sont déjà les plus exposés aux risques climatiques. Il n'ont pas les ressources pour s'adapter et récupérer rapidement après un choc et ils vivent souvent dans les zones les plus vulnérables, parce que les moins chères, sur les rives inondables de cours d'eau, des lopins en pente sujets aux glissements de terrain ou des terres agricoles éloignées des sources d'eau ou tout simplement sur des terres de l'État. L'impact dramatique des intempéries sur leurs habitations et leurs moyens de subsistance peut piéger les pauvres dans la pauvreté et y entraîner les plus vulnérables d'où l'urgence de construction de logements sociaux écologiques.

António Guterres, Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, nous rappelait récemment que c'est une année sans précédent tant pour l'homme que pour la planète. La pandémie de COVID-19 a bouleversé les vies dans le monde entier, pendant ce temps, le réchauffement de notre planète et le dérèglement du climat se poursuivent. Il a dit, je cite –

“La nécessité d'une transition nette, inclusive et à long terme pour lutter contre la crise climatique et parvenir à un développement durable n'est jamais apparu aussi clairement. Nous devons tirer parti de la reprise après la pandémie pour en faire une réelle opportunité de construire un avenir meilleur.”

Je remercie également le ministre Kavi Ramano d'insister sur la préparation de la génération présente et de l'éducation de la génération future. Merci de ne pas avoir oublié l'Ile Rodrigues et les îles voisines. Le projet de loi prévoyant l'établissement d'un Comité interministériel présidé par le Premier ministre, le Chef commissaire de Rodrigues pourra également y assister, y participer et contribuer à mettre en place tous les projets y associant. Différents instruments sont nécessaires pour y parvenir, mais cela ne fonctionne que si les gens comprennent ce qu'est le changement climatique et comment on peut y remédier.

Nous devons, donc, changer la façon dont les gens pensent et agissent pour changer les mentalités. Nous devons changer les mentalités, pas le climat, et l'éducation est essentielle pour réaliser cette transformation radicale. Si nous réussissons à implémenter ce projet de loi sur le changement climatique, nous enverrons un message fort aux citoyens qui doivent faire des choix, et cela aidera également les entreprises, les fonctionnaires à tous les niveaux du gouvernement, à savoir qu'ils s'inscrivent dans un engagement planétaire à bâtir des économies durables, et le plus important c'est que cela nous mettra tous sur la voie d'un avenir plus propre, plus sain, et oui, plus sûr.

Maintenant, soyons clairs, si nous ne le faisons pas maintenant, si nous n'agissons pas de façon plus téméraire dès maintenant, ce pourrait être la trahison la plus profonde commise par une génération à l'égard d'une autre ou d'autres dans toute l'histoire de notre pays. Mais nous devons empêcher cela et je crois que nous pourrons le faire, M. le président. Il n'est pas trop tard pour réduire les émissions, limiter les dégâts et récolter les bénéfices écologiques, économiques et sécuritaires d'un avenir énergétique, plus propre et plus vert. C'est notre responsabilité de mener à bien ces transformations. Donc, nous serons à la hauteur. Beaucoup de gens pourraient ne pas faire d'efforts pour lutter contre quelque chose qui semble vaguement technique et non menaçante, appelée changement climatique, mais à peu près tous

le feraient pour protéger nos proches, nos maisons et nos moyens de subsistance pour bâtir un monde meilleur.

Le changement climatique est trop vrai pour être bon. Alors, disons les choses telles qu'elles sont, abordons-les ensemble et redoublons d'efforts. Au cours des 200 dernières années, les humains ont largement démontré qu'ils pouvaient changer le climat et nous l'avons changé pour le pire en faisant de mauvais choix. Le monde a fauté, M. le président ! Maintenant, montrons que nous pouvons changer cela pour le mieux en faisant les bons choix.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramchurrun!

(7.08 p.m.)

Mr P. Ramchurrun (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Thank you very much for granting me the opportunity to address this august Assembly under extremely important subject, that is, the Second Reading of this Climate Change Bill, the phenomenal climate change crisis whose consequences are not just local but global.

The introduction of this Bill to the National Assembly is, indeed, the defining moment in the history of our island. Our island located at the till of the Indian Ocean, is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, so much that the 2018 World Risk Report ranks it the 16th among the highest disaster risk countries and two years later, that is, 2020, the World Risk Report indicates that this country is now on the 53rd position, that is, a shift from 16th to 53rd clearly indicates that *travay la pe fer* and this Government means when it says *travay la pe fer*.

I thank all my colleagues from both sides of the House who have participated in the debate so far and encourage the interventions to be as constructive as possible to ensure that the proposed legislation obtains an overwhelming majority. I would like to thank the hon. Minister Ramano for successfully driving and delivering this piece of legislation and also thanks all the stakeholders who were consulted during the process of the drafting of this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, no country, whether big or small, wealthy or poor, can escape the impact of climate change. Rising sea levels threaten every coastline. More powerful storms and flood threaten every continent. More frequent drought and crop failures breed hunger

and conflict in places where hunger and conflict already thrived. The security and stability of each nation and all people, our prosperity, our health, our safety are in jeopardy and the time left for us to reverse this tide is running out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change has the potential to undermine significantly the development gains made across the world. According to the World Health Organisation as of the year 2030, climate change is expected to contribute to approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress. The COVID-19 pandemic has destroyed lives, livelihood and economies. It has not slowed down climate change, but represents an ever-growing threat for people's health, jobs and safety. The stakes could not be higher. Science shows temperature in record breaking territory, greenhouse gas levels are mounting, sea level is rising and national disasters are getting worse. As the world confronts the pandemic and embarks on recovery, there is growing recognition that the recovery must be a pathway to a green and sustainable economy that produces jobs and prosperity, reduces emissions and builds resilience.

However, for nearly two decades now, the writing has been very clear on the wall. Various scientific reports conducted by international organisations have been predicting for years now that billions of lives will be adversely impacted in developing countries due to climate change. Studies also state that Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents and several factors affect its ability to cope with climate change, such as poverty, lack of skills, lack of technology and information, low level of primary education and health care, poor access to resources, low management capabilities and armed conflicts. This is why concerted global action is required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are grateful to world leaders who have so far rang the alarm and more importantly, taken bold actions within their countries. We are equally thankful towards His Holiness Pope Francis who has declared a global climate emergency, warning of the dangers of global warming and that a failure to act urgently to reduce greenhouse gases would be, I quote –

“a brutal act of injustice towards the poor and future generations.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the preservation of our God gifted unique environment across our island has been one of the main objectives throughout our economic history. Hence, since our island has been managed by the French and British, Mauritius has focussed on sustainable development on a long-term basis, never compromising our environment for economic

growth. However, the last 50 years has proved that as much humanity has built and created for its evolution, a direct and proportionate level of destruction has also been observed. Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is vulnerable from rising sea levels to increasing rainfall intensities, to longer dry spells.

This Government agrees that we need to take urgent climate action now for the sake of our future generations. Our ancestors came from all the five continents in the world and upheld during their travels the fundamental principles of preservation and respect for Mother Nature. If the previous generation left us clean and green island, we must make our legacy a sustainable country as we pass on this motherland to our children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is facing an unprecedented risk due to the climate crisis, which is tearing down the traditional economic, environmental and social structures and systems that we have relied on so heavily for the past century. The climate crisis is changing our world and if we want to survive these catastrophic changes, we too must change with it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the main reason why the Climate Change Bill is being introduced and debated. The Republic of Mauritius is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and as it is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), vulnerability is especially high in the coastal zones, where the combination of accelerating sea level rise and increasing frequency and the intensity of tropical cyclones includes risk of considerable economic loss, humanitarian stress and environmental degradation. The National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework notes that half of the beaches in Mauritius could disappear by 2050 with disastrous impacts on coastal ecosystems and the economy. The agricultural sector is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. Climate change impacts on fisheries that include migratory ships in tuna aggregations, thereby it is interrupting the local seafood hub activities and other fish based industries.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, this landmark Bill sets out the critical legislative framework which Mauritius needs to survive and thrive in the phase of the climate crisis. By legislating to fight against climate change, the Government is ensuring that any decision it takes, puts climate change at its centre.

It is creating the structure that will maximise the opportunities of variable and clean industries while revitalising the regions and protecting our most vulnerable. From the science to the solutions, this legislation is bringing all the directly and indirectly impact the

stakeholders together. So, we will leave no one behind as we tackle to global climate emergency.

The threat for climate change is serious. It is urgent and it is growing. Our generation's response to this challenge will be judged by history for fail to meet it boldly, swiftly and together, we will risk consigning future generations to an irreversible catastrophe. This is not alarmism, this is the future we are facing and this is why we must set out the frameworks to counter this.

However, this Bill is not about making a statement or political points scoring. It is about ensuring that current and successive Governments take the action that is required for this situation. This Bill is about giving fellow Mauritians the confidence that their future generations will have access to a clean air, to clean water and healthy and secure your systems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a quote from President John F. Kennedy who once observed that –

“Our problems are manmade; therefore, they may be solved by man.”

It is true that for too many years, humanity has been slow to respond to and even recognise the magnitude of the climate threat. Hence, the Bill comes at the most appropriate moment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill is about acting now to reduce the cost we will incur if we do not take rapid action. The Climate Change Bill also aims to promote opportunities that may arise as a result of our Governments' objective to transition to a cleaning energy economy. These targets are being pursued by upholding three main principles which are the precautionary principle, the principle of inter-generational equity and the principle of social equity which when combined will ledged to the minimisation our island contribution to the climate crisis by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and increasing our generation of renewable energy.

M. le président, l'écologie s'est avant tout la défense des écosystèmes, composée par une multitude d'organismes. Pour adopter une démarche écologique, il est important de comprendre l'équilibre de la relation entre l'homme et la nature, de l'aimer et de le protéger.

Il faut surtout ne pas politiser ce combat qui doit nous unir tous et non nous diviser. Un pays comme Maurice a le devoir de faire le maximum pour protéger son écosystème car notre survie en dépend.

C'est bien d'être un militant écologique et j'ai un grand respect pour ceux qui militent sans relâche pour un monde meilleur. Mais il faut être sincère dans ce combat et ne pas utiliser l'écologie à des fins purement politiques.

Certains écologistes dans le monde sont financés par les plus grands pollueurs de la planète. Ce genre d'hypocrisie doit cesser. Et comme l'avait dit Nicolas Hulot, l'écologiste, que je respecte –

« L'écologie est aussi et surtout un problème culturel. Le respect de l'environnement passe par un grand nombre de changements comportementaux. »

Je pense qu'on doit changer par nos comportements pollueurs.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank Members of both sides of the House for their attention and I would ask each and every one to ponder on the following extract from a speech by Sir Anerood Jugnauth. A speech in 1983 which demonstrates how the MSM has since its creation upheld its founding ideology of preserving the balance of Mother Nature and protecting our citizens gains, the negative impacts of disturbing the sacred balance. I quote –

“This competition makes us ponder on how we can help nature to help us. Not exploit natural resources rapaciously and denude our earth of its riches, impoverishing future generations. It makes us realised that discipline, enthusiasm and patience are required to make our environment beautiful for our own joy and satisfaction and for the pleasure of others who will also be inspired by our example. It is a matter of deep regret that since man first discovered that he could use nature for his own purposes, he has been interfering with this environment.

The ecological problems with which we are now concerned, embrace diverse aspects, ranging from the economic, social and psychological problems of human settlements to the management and use of natural resources and the conservation of natural habitats.

This competition also focuses on the need for man to learn again to involve the energy of growing things, to re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life and to recognise that one can take from the earth and the atmosphere only so much as one puts back into them.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, 37 years since Sir Anerood Jugnauth shared his thoughts and they are still very much alive and relevant. So, let us be inspired by this omnipresent wisdom and enlightening words and endeavour to give back to our sacred earth an atmosphere this Climate Change Bill which will undoubtedly alter the very landscape our island and guarantee a cleaner and more secure island for generations to come.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

(7.24 p.m.)

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is considered to be the 7th most exposed country to natural disasters out of 171 countries and ranked 19th in terms of risks because of the state of preparedness of the country.

Climate change, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the environment are a top priority for our citizens and in particular for our young people. Science is clear, each year matters, each choice matters, each half a degree matters.

There is utmost urgency to act, Mr Speaker, Sir. Fires have raged from the Amazon to Siberia. Heat waves, droughts, cyclones are affecting billions of people throughout the world. Climate change and the biodiversity loss are already now affecting critical lives systems on earth, threatening livelihood of many.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in our country, the following key sectors, namely agriculture, coastal resources and tourism, water resources, marine and terrestrial biodiversity, fisheries, human health and infrastructure are highly vulnerable to climate change, including sea level rise. The adverse impacts will also have profound socio-economic implications, but these facts were on the table for quite some time. For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, agriculture. A projected reduction in rainfall may lead to as much as 15% to 25% decline in agricultural production by 2050.

Coastal resources and tourism: accentuated beach erosion has shrunk the width of beaches around certain coastal areas in Mauritius by up to 10 metres over the last 8 years.

Water resources, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a decreasing trend in annual precipitation of about 8% compared to the 1950s, coupled to an increased in rainfall

variability and water scarce periods. Projections indicate that the utilisable water resources may decrease by up to 13% by 2050, if no action is taken to restore catchment areas.

Same for marine and terrestrial biodiversity, Mr Speaker, Sir, in both Mauritius and Rodrigues, breeding and reproductions of various plants and animal species are suspected to have already been affected by the changing climate. Fisheries also, Mr Speaker, Sir, frequent fish mortality suspected to be linked to climate change observed in the near shore around Mauritius; projected increase occurrence of coral bleaching would reduce coral biodiversity and fish species for both Mauritius and Rodrigues and what to say on human health, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are already facing a very dangerous pandemic. We are living with it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill before this House may be viewed, in my humble opinion, as being one of the very first time in its mandate and, after six years that this Government is coming forward with a Bill that talks about mitigation but most importantly about adaptation to climate change.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill ought to have been more innovative and reflecting the aspiration of the people of this country in terms of accountability and transparency with regard to access to information concerning major infrastructural projects. We are all aware that, as at now, we do not know the impact on environment in medium and long terms of the Metro Express project on the inhabitants and their respective environment. Same for the on-going project in Agaléga, this has never been privy despite several PNQs and PQs with information as to the environment impact assessment of such projects. Same applies when mega shopping malls are allowed to construct without the mandatory requirement to prepare an environment impact assessment, I would have expected such issues to be addressed promptly in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill, in a nutshell, contains no novel approach as such save and except that it gives a regulatory framework in terms of climate change. As the main object of this Bill clearly puts it, this Bill seeks to establish a legal framework towards making Mauritius a climate-change resilient and low emission country and this Bill intends to do so with the setting up of Inter-Ministerial Council, which if we look at the proposed First Schedule of this Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, almost all Ministers, 21 of them, shall form part of that Council as per the provisions of Clause 4 of the Bill.

So, in a nutshell, it is the Cabinet sitting altogether again under this Inter-Ministerial Council. Is it not the job of Government to come with policies? Do we need an Inter-

Ministerial Council for Government to formulate and come forward with measures to tackle climate change? So my argument is as follows - the Government has got a mandate to bring policies to tackle climate change. This Bill, there is no novel approach to that effect. It is only putting on paper what we already have as policy makers have to do as their job, we have got the hon. Minister, he is the Minister of Climate Change as well. His title is Minister of Environment and Climate Change. So, how will those Committees set up goals and targets to fight against this danger of climate change?

Mr Speaker, Sir, on top of that, this Bill introduces new bureaucratic committees by the setting up of the Department of Climate Change as per Clause 8 of the Bill and the Climate Change Committee as per Clause 11 of the Bill which, in most cases, are overlapping in their functions and approach.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the situation we face is an emergency and this calls for a consensual cross party approach so that our country could take a lead on climate action and show the way to all other affected SIDS countries. I am of the humble view that we should, as the UK did last year, come forward with the declaration in this House that we are in a climate emergency.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we will all recall that 12 years ago, Mauritius suffered from torrential rains caused by the cyclone Lola where four citizens including a 13-year old girl lost their lives and lots of houses and vehicles were damaged as well as other infrastructures. Years later, a deadlier flooding occurred with 152mm of rainfall on 30 of March 2013 causing the death of 11 people. Garbage and mudslides overflowed the gutters with houses and buildings damaged. We had then cyclone Berguitta which hit Mauritius and Reunion Island on January 2018; caused torrential rains and flooding. Several areas of both islands were flooded and around 15 people were rescued from flood waters in Mauritius. In the last 15 years, Mr Speaker, Sir, small seismic activities were felt between Réunion Island and Rodrigues Island ranging from 4.0 magnitude to 6.7 magnitude. Mauritius is a highly exposed to extreme climatic phenomenon with serious risks to life and hard-won development gains which include basic amenities and properties.

The world, Mr Speaker, Sir, is facing a climate crisis that would spiral dangerously out of control unless rapid and dramatic actions are taken immediately. We are taking about nothing else than the irreversible destruction of the environment within our lifetimes.

We have experienced it here, Mr Speaker, Sir, with disasters that we have faced and yet our level of preparedness, if I may say, on a level of ten, was two or three at the most, giving biscuits and a bottle of water to people sleeping on the floor at social centres. This is not level of preparedness and I do not see that addressed properly in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be wrong to say that anyone party in this House has a monopoly of virtue. All Governments have contributed to address this issue of climate change. This Bill is not a novel or a landmark approach.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the Leader of the Opposition rightly put it, this Bill is, in fact, an extension of the applicability of the Environment Protection Act 2002 which was introduced by hon. Rajesh Bhagwan when he was the then Minister of Environment.

Let us also not forget, we had in the past the elaboration and implementation of the concept Maurice Ile Durable way back in 2005-2006 by the Labour/PMSD Government. So, let us try to ensure that we have a constructive debate that combines a sense of urgency about the challenge in front of us and determination to take action in the future. Every week, a different report or study alerts us to the real and catastrophic dangers of global warming.

Recently we were told that polar bears will become extinct by the end of the century if more is not done to tackle climate change. Few days ago, Mr Speaker, Sir, we were told that, in a short time from now, millions of people around the world will be exposed to dangerous levels of heat stress with many places experiencing summers too hot to work or even living. We will face it in a couple of weeks or within the next two or three months.

Last week, Mr Speaker, Sir, the World Meteorological Organisation predicted that, over the next five years, global temperatures would likely break the 1.5-degree increase threshold compared with pre-industrial temperature levels. We know that keeping below 1.5 is vital to avoid the worst climate impacts on our planet. That was the figure agreed in 2015 in the Paris Climate Accord. Yet, despite the weekly warnings of dire consequences here in Mauritius, it is only now that we are introducing a Climate Change Bill to ensure that we are doing our bit to fight back and be in compliance with Conventions that we have signed way years back. This Bill was ready since last year, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the homework was already done by the then Minister of Environment, Mr Sinatambou.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that lack of urgency is quite frankly unbecoming but better now than later if we are to learn any lessons from the current health crisis. That swift and early action based on science is key. Perhaps there are still some climate deniers in our society who think

that our contribution is not needed. It will cost us too much or maybe we could care less about the polar bears of the Arctic because that is pretty far away from Mauritius. Maybe, some think that we will not have to face any other consequences of climate change or that we can live with the consequences that we do face.

I really hope that we are beyond all these arguments, Mr Speaker, Sir. Global warming is a startling fact. It is not something that will happen; it is something that is happening. Ten of the warmest years on record have occurred since 2005 and the decade just ended was the hottest ever. Increasing global temperatures mean rising sea levels which affect weather patterns that cause increased flooding, droughts, storms, fires and species dying across the globe. Those things are not happening just in faraway places.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have elaborated earlier on, over recent years our villages, towns, communities and infrastructure on this island have all been severely impacted on and damaged by storms, flooding and other forms of extreme weather. Our species habitats have been affected too. All of that is set to continue. In fact, all of it is set to increase at the cost of much more damage on this island and of many more lives elsewhere if we do not address the issue. And the level of preparedness, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the key word and this is where the Government should start working seriously, the level of preparedness.

Global warming is happening as a result also of human behaviour, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, we need to change human behaviour. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are debating today and on this side of the House, we feel that the same urgency has been solely lacking from this Government. For example, if we have a look at clause 8 sub paragraph 2(i), and I quote –

“promote the implementation of Article 6 of UNFCCC on education, training and public awareness on climate change and related matters;”

It is clear that this Bill has missed its goals and targets right from its inception inasmuch as Article 6 of the Convention was adopted way back in 1992, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is some 20 years back and it is only now that this Government wants to promote Article 6. It has already been done throughout the years, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we need legislation that puts us on a path to carbon neutrality by 2030 at latest. We need policies to guide us and hold us all accountable on this path and this Bill, I am sorry to say, lacks behind in elaborating in very clear terms those policies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, by doing so we will not only contribute to tackling climate breakdown but unlock the vast economic potential of a just transition to a thriving green

economy with highly quality and well paid employment using the vast renewable energy sources that we have on this island. And for all of us, better transport, cleaner air and healthier lives and the creation of green jobs. Yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not see these issues being canvassed and given due attention in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for that reason, I am for the establishment of a just legal framework to bring together all the stakeholders in society to map out and agree on the future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall thus urge the hon. Minister to bring amendments and empower the youth. I have listened carefully this morning to the hon. Prime Minister in his answer to a PQ from hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger on the setting up of the National Youth Environment Council. And I propose that amendments be brought to clause 11 sub paragraph (1) of the Bill to include - a representative of this council to sit as a member in the Climate Change Committee being proposed. I also propose, Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to instead of the Minister appointing a representative of the private sector at clause 11 sub paragraph 1(f) of the Bill, let Business Mauritius designate its own representative to sit on the Climate Change Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall propose that this Bill as it was the case in the Environment Protection Act 2002 at section 9 with the establishment of the *Police de l'Environnement* to consider empowering more this unit in terms of manpower and equipment as at date, Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot have a *Police de l'Environnement* with some mere 30 officers and defective vehicles and equipment to patrol the country and make sure that we are in conformity with the law. This is unacceptable in a high-income country, Mr Speaker. 30 officers of the *Police de l'Environnement*!

At this point in time, Mr Speaker, Sir, I also move this House that we should be united to consider as a matter of principle to go in line with our commitments to tackle climate change. I will advocate for the ban to be imposed on fireworks, Mr Speaker, Sir. Hornbach, one of the largest hardware store chains in Germany announced that it would no longer sell fireworks across Europe from 2020 onwards, in particular for reasons of animal welfare and environmental protection. To protect the environment and animals as well as the health of employees and customers, Germany's second largest drug store chain, Mr Speaker, Sir, Rossmann stopped selling fireworks last year. Their new moto, the fireworks display last an hour but we want animal welfare and clean air 365 days a year, and that does not go together.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of the humble view that we can come forward with such bold decisions to move for the ban of fireworks as we are doing with single- use plastic bags. This shall be a symbolic, yet essential way to show our commitment to safeguard our environment. Be it minute in action, if we compare same on the world scale to combat climate change. But Mr Speaker, Sir, legislation must have substance and must be based on science. We have ten to twenty years to make a far-reaching impact.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are in a climate emergency. I am sure that most of us got involved in politics to effect positive change. The most important change and legacy that politicians in this mandate from both sides of this House can leave is one that helps to shape the future of our children and grandchildren by taking positive steps to save and protect our environment and their future prosperity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would urge the hon. Minister to consider the proposals being made and also to address this issue of the level of preparedness for us to adapt to this situation of climate change which is irreversible. I will not take more longer of your time, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Thank you. God bless Mauritius!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub, will you be long?

Mr Doolub: No.

Mr Speaker: Please, go ahead!

(7.45 p.m.)

Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is always difficult, Mr Speaker, Sir, to know where to start when talking about climate change. For decades now, we have been hearing of the threats of climate change. Today, it is no longer an issue clouded in mystery because climate change affects nearly every aspect of human life on this planet. And at every scale, it also affects everything, our security, our food and water systems, our energy and economic systems and our infrastructure. It affects the intensity of natural disasters and any ecosystem whether terrestrial or marine. It affects our mental health, the priorities of our communities and cities, the futures of our children. It affects our politics, the openness of our societies how we as nations, relate to other nations and how we as individuals, relate to each other.

What we are experiencing today is far from a new normal. Impacts will get worse and worse as warming proceeds. Indeed, the phrase climate change may no longer adequately capture the urgency of this reality which might better be described as climate breakdown and many climate scientists are now embracing the label 'alarmist'. Climate change is an urgent issue, Mr Speaker, Sir. Global warming, climate change, the devastating loss of biodiversity are the greatest threats that humanity has ever faced and one largely of our own creation. We need to take revolutionary actions to create a more sustainable future because the greenhouse gases that cause global warming and climate change have a delayed effect like a disease with a long incubation period. This means that we do not know how much irreversible damage has been done already, but certainly, if we do not act now, the effects will be many times more devastating still. The last ten years have seen a significant rise in climate related natural disasters and associated costs. Natural disasters with increasing intensity clearly related to global warming include tropical cyclones, wild fires, drought and flooding.

Hurricanes and typhoons are becoming more frequent across the globe and more intense due to rapidly warming oceans, warmer atmospheres that hold more moisture, sea level rise that intensifies storm surge and slower motions due to climate related stream changes. Cyclones are now tending to intensify more rapidly as well. The damage has been done mainly by the rich nations which burn more fossil fuels like coal and oil and so emit more CO₂. Though everyone is threatened in the long run, the poorest suffer worst and most immediately. People are dying from climate change now though it is not obvious, since it is happening through a steady and unrelenting increase in the frequency and severity of the kind of natural disasters that we are used to. Mauritius is also suffering from climate change, Mr Speaker, Sir.

A few figures will allow everyone here in this House and throughout the country to measure the extent of the problem we have to deal with today. Mr Speaker, Sir, from 1951 to 2014, the average temperature in Mauritius rose to about 1.2 degree Celsius. We are already witnessing extreme climatic events, flash floods, water scarcity, rapid intensification of cyclones to category 5, for example, cyclone Fantala in 2016 was a category 5 cyclone. The average annual rainfall has decreased by around 8% since 1950. Our country is already experiencing an accelerated 5.6 mm sea level rise every year and, Mr Speaker, Sir, Albion, Bel Ombre and Mont Choisy have already lost 20 metres of beaches over the last decade, while the situation on the east coast is not better.

Climate change is also responsible for the decline of 11% fish capture and production and we have already lost between 2% up to 56% of the remaining life coral cover in certain lagoons during the past years.

M. le président, il y a urgence et nous aurions tort de nous voiler la face. Nous sommes au cœur d'une nouvelle ère géologique, l'Anthropocène engendré par les formes de développement industriels, agricoles, urbains, infrastructurels et énergétiques qui mettent l'humanité en danger. Nos façons de nous loger, de vivre et nous déplacer, de nous alimenter, de consommer sont dépendantes de paramètres planétaires qui sont encore d'altération. En d'autres termes, les crises enchainent qui sont celles du climat, de la hausse et de l'acidification des océans, de l'eau potable ou encore, de la biodiversité sont largement dus aux formes de développement des sociétés depuis *grosso modo* deux siècles. Hors, ces dernières sont aujourd'hui mises en danger par cette crise planétaire. Les travaux de prospective de l'ONU, du groupe international d'experts sur le changement climatique, le GICE et de l'organisation internationale des migrations font apparaître que les années et les décennies qui viennent, risquent d'être marquées par des migrations climatiques pouvant affecter de 250 millions à plus de 1,5 milliards de personnes. Ces migrations risquent d'être déclenchées par la mise en synergie des effets du changement climatique sur des systèmes agricoles fragiles, sur le cycle de l'eau dont dépendent des populations entières, des infrastructures et des Etats fragiles.

En d'autres termes, l'estimation haute fait apparaître que plus de 15% à 20% de l'humanité pourrait entrer en migration tant à l'intérieur des pays, comme c'est le cas aujourd'hui, par exemple, au Bangladesh qu'au niveau international et ce sur l'ensemble des continents. Cela va bien évidemment entraîner des questionnements politiques très profonds, M. le président.

Le changement climatique pose, en effet, fondamentalement un problème de développement. Il menace d'exacerber la pauvreté et de nuire à la croissance économique. Ce phénomène est d'autant plus préoccupant que la crise du COVID-19 au niveau planétaire, a sensiblement aggravé la situation économique de nombreux pays, y compris le nôtre, mais, fort heureusement qu'on est *COVID-safe* jusqu'à maintenant.

Mais, en fonction de leur modèle de croissance et des investissements consentis pour couvrir les besoins en énergie, en nourriture et en eau d'une population toujours plus nombreuse, les pays vont aggraver le changement climatique, accentuant les risques sur

l'ensemble du globe, soit, à l'inverse, contribuer à y remédier. On peut dégager deux grandes tendances, d'un côté la combinaison de l'aggravation continue du changement climatique et de la concurrence internationale pour les ressources entraînera une multiplication des conflits. Il est probable, en effet, que l'on assiste à une montée des extrêmes, la dislocation des nations, d'États ou de sociétés entières. La réalité de ce genre de situation est, hélas, déjà vécue par plusieurs populations, par exemple, de Somalie, d'Irak ou de la Syrie. Cependant, d'un autre côté, face à ce risque immense des possibilités de coopération tout aussi immense existe et commence à émerger. Il est, donc, possible que le XXI^e siècle finisse par être celui de la grande coopération stratégique entre les Etats, les sociétés, les entreprises, les pouvoirs publics, les citoyens et les acteurs privés afin de transcender la menace climatique.

Le *Climate Change Bill* présenté aujourd'hui, M. le président, a pour objectif de préparer notre pays à agir avant qu'il ne soit trop tard et, en passant, M. le président, ce n'est pas aujourd'hui que ce gouvernement agit sur des effets du changement climatique. Dès 2014, au moins quatre projets de loi ont été présentés tous ayant pour but directement ou indirectement de mieux nous préparer face aux effets de changement climatique. Il y a eu, entre autres, *the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act* de 2016, *the Land Drainage Authority Act* de 2017, *the Local Government Amendment Act* en 2018 et le *Mauritius Meteorological Services Act* en 2019. Nous devons agir maintenant et à travers la présentation de ce projet de loi, c'est ce que nous faisons. La nécessité d'agir sur le climat est plus urgente et plus immédiate que jamais. Les mesures prises jusqu'ici, tant au niveau national qu'au niveau international, sont déjà quelque chose, mais tout à fait, peut-être insuffisante pour faire face au niveau actuel de la menace. La principale raison en est que la déstabilisation du climat mondial a progressé beaucoup plus rapidement que ce que les scientifiques l'avaient imaginé. Nous devons nous organiser pour mieux préparer et mieux prévoir les cyclones, protéger les côtes menacés par l'élévation du niveau de la mer, sauvegarder les espèces animales, cultiver des plantes mieux adaptées aux changements climatiques locales ou encore sauvegarder la faune et la flore sauvage.

A ce propos, au moins trois villages dans la Circonscription No. 12, nommément Mare Tabac, Plaine Magnien et Trois Boutiques sont exposés à des risques d'inondation. Heureusement et grâce aux initiatives prises, notamment par mon colistier, l'honorable ministre Hurreeram, des travaux d'aménagement de drains sont déjà en cours. Les habitants des villages concernés seront ainsi mieux protégés, mais c'est aussi de leur devoir de respecter l'environnement pour se prévenir contre des risques de catastrophes naturelles qui

seront, hélas, de plus en plus récurrents. Le fait est que si nous ne sommes pas préparés aux imprévus, la situation pourrait changer de façon spectaculaire sans que nous puissions nous adapter à un tout nouvel ensemble de circonstances qui nous dépassent. La seule chose dont nous pouvons être sûrs c'est que les adaptations que nous devons alors faire, seront d'autant plus drastiques et traumatisantes qu'aujourd'hui. Demain se prépare dès aujourd'hui, M. le président, il n'est pas question de continuer à vivre comme nous le faisons il y a quelque temps de cela ou de nous remettre à vivre comme nos grands-parents. Nous sommes à l'aube d'une nouvelle ère, une ère où nous devons être moins gaspilleurs, plus respectueux de la planète et mieux armés pour affronter des menaces. Des conséquences du réchauffement climatique n'est pas un problème environnemental comme les autres. Nous en avons pris conscience de manière significative que depuis une vingtaine d'années.

Pendant ce temps, il a révolutionné le débat sur l'environnement et a amplifié au-delà de toutes mesures l'ampleur de la menace environnementale. À une époque, parler de sauver la planète était un slogan plutôt vide de sens. Le changement climatique signifie qu'il est désormais bien réel et que la réalité exige des législations comme le *Climate Change Bill* que nous nous apprêtons à voter.

Avant de conclure, M. le président, je voudrais, avec votre permission, m'adresser à tous les Mauriciens. Le combat contre le réchauffement climatique est l'affaire de tous, de tous les Mauriciens. Nous devons nous serrer les coudes. Nous avons besoin des uns et des autres. Nous devons être une nation unie et solidaire, c'est à cette condition que nous arriverons à lutter contre le réchauffement climatique. Les grandes nations organisent des sommets, signent des accords et investissent des millions d'euros dans de nombreuses initiatives, mais chacun, chaque Mauricien à son échelle, peut apporter sa petite pierre à l'édifice pour tenter de préserver notre île et planète.

Je vais conclure maintenant, M. le président, par un échange de remerciement et félicitation d'un 'Kavi' à un autre. Bravo l'honorable ministre Kavi Ramano pour non seulement avoir présenté ce projet de loi à la Chambre, mais surtout pour agir maintenant pour le bien de tout un chacun, incluant les membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre.

I am done, thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I now suspend the sitting for one hour.

At 7.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming 9.11 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please, be seated. I call upon hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Merci, M. le président. Ce projet de loi autour du changement climatique suscite beaucoup d'intérêt, tant au niveau de la Chambre qu'au niveau des citoyens, en passant par la société civile.

À la lumière de mes lectures, j'ai réalisé à un moment que cette auguste Assemblée a été malheureusement contrainte d'accueillir certains lobbyistes ayant habilement survécus à travers le temps et passant en ce moment même sous nos yeux, le relais à d'autres lobbyistes ayant été élevés à en devenir.

L'honorable Joanna Bérenger a déclaré dans son intervention, et je cite -

« Les effets de serre que nous subissons aujourd'hui a commencé par les émissions il y a une vingtaine d'années. »

Elle a bien raison mais elle omet de nous dire qui sont les auteurs et les responsables qui ont contribué à l'effet de serre pendant les 20 dernières années, et on s'interroge sur la démarche délibérée de la députée qui roule en Berline et l'air conditionné. Il faut savoir être conscient de ses responsabilités, a déclaré Madame Bérenger. L'honorable Joanna Bérenger voit, semble-t-il, que le gouvernement et l'administration publique comme ceux méritants ces critiques.

M. le président, qu'en est-il de ces bourgeois bénéficiant de l'argent du petit peuple à travers les compagnies listées en bourse et roulant en grosse Berline avec l'air conditionné et dont les conseils d'administration ne sont composés des représentants du petit peuple, mais des parents à eux et des petits copains et petites copines. Alors soyons sérieux, Madame la députée, il faut enlever la visière !

Le contenu du discours de l'honorable Joanna Bérenger confirme davantage mes pensées sur l'existence d'une politique bien établie, voulant donner du sens à une très chère expression locale, '*zako la konn protez so montagne.*' Comme d'autres, je suis déçue, oui, je suis déçue car j'avais espoir qu'elle appartiendrait à une génération différente, les *millenials* comme on le dit, qui auraient permis une vraie démocratisation de l'économie, mais j'ai eu tort d'y avoir cru. Elue en tête de liste sur la sueur des éternels 'Soldats Lalit', à travers des discours sur l'écologie et, s'il vous plaît, pas un seul mot aujourd'hui sur les producteurs indépendants d'énergies ayant fait fortune sur la production énergétique à travers le charbon, alors que nous parlons du changement climatique.

Les jeunes capitalistes, M. le président, ont pris le dessus sur l'idéologie, semble-t-il. L'honorable Joanna Bérenger est ici pour faire perdurer une tradition capitaliste et non servir le peuple comme elle le prétend, et pour moi, M. le président, c'est une hypocrite. Je la dénonce auprès des militants d'énergie propre...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second!

An hon. Member: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: May I just take it, then I come to your point of order?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy, I would humbly request you to remove the qualification that you addressed towards hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: The truth can never be unparliamentarily.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Okay, I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Do you still have a point of order?

An hon. Member: That was the point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please, continue!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Merci, M. le président. Je considère comme étant triste que l'honorable membre passe sous silence total les effets néfastes du charbon sur l'environnement d'une part, et sur la santé de la population, d'autre part. Un vrai militant agit par conviction et sincérité et non à des fins *fashionable* ou bien *window dressing*, tendance pour les besoins d'être dans le thème par pure stratégie politique. L'honorable membre, paraît-il, semble avoir une mémoire sélective et une définition du militantisme propre à elle et dont la remise en question ne serait que justifiée. L'avenir de nos enfants sur le sujet du changement climatique dépendra du sérieux de notre engagement et d'un vrai changement qui a débuté en 2015 avec des mesures courageuses et essentielles. Beaucoup de membres se trouvant de ce côté de la Chambre ont bénéficié d'un renouvellement de confiance émanant de la jeune génération pour avoir sanctionné les sacs en plastique non-biodégradable, et surtout pour avoir agi contre l'utilisation du charbon dans la production énergétique au profit d'un vrai programme pour l'énergie verte.

M. le président, il a fallu un gouvernement *Lepep* pour enterrer pour de bon le projet d'une centrale à charbon à Pointe-aux-Caves, Albion, et cela, après des épisodes interminables de *risser/pousser* d'un gouvernement Parti Travailleuse/ PMSD en 2007 à

2014 ; une alliance dont le point fort a été de commanditer des rapports et des rapports pour ensuite rouler son monde dans la farine. Le projet City Power est un exemple.

L'autre point fort de l'alliance Parti Travailleiste/ PMSD a été d'être champion des slogans vides : '*mo pou sanz ou la vie dan cent zours*', '*Maurice île durable*', '*Maurice, c'est un plaisir*', et le non moins fameux, '*Démocratisation de l'économie.*' Mais qu'ont fait les militants sur la question de CT Power ? Ce serait fidèle de reconnaître qu'ils ont, comme à leur habitude, haussé le ton, qu'ils ont provoqué une levée de bouclier mais encore une fois sans résultat. Toujours est-il que crier c'est bien, mais agir c'est mieux, M. le président.

M. le président, on ne peut agir qu'en étant de ce côté de la Chambre et pour être de ce côté de la Chambre il faut avoir la confiance du peuple, et pour avoir la confiance du peuple, il faut être sincère et c'est ce que nous sommes. L'engagement du gouvernement *Lepep* a été traduit dans l'action une fois au pouvoir. Le projet CT Power a été *out karé karé* sans hésitation, sans négociation obscure et ce n'était que le début d'une marche, *la tête haute pour l'énergie propre*. Les accords acquis entre le *Central Electricity Board* et les *Independent Power Producers* jusqu'en 2022 ont été revus avec volonté et fermeté.

Aujourd'hui, nous poursuivons notre marche à travers le *Climate Change Bill*, apporté par l'honorable Ramano qui est l'un de ces militants sincères se trouvant de ce côté de la Chambre et sous le bon leadership.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, much has been said about the climatic change, much has been said about the effects that are happening right now in the world. We all know that we need to react, we all know that the change needs to happen but it's not about coming here and only being fashionable and just to fit in with the young millennials, just to convince those people who truly, who sincerely believe in climate change, who sincerely believe in action. This is what we need today, we need real debate, we don't need anyone to come here and to show off; anyone can write any kind of speech and come here and say, okay, we are suggesting this and that. No! We need people who have real courage to come here in this Assembly and say the truth and to deny all the facts, and not to have a selective memory. If we are talking about climate change, if we are talking about bringing a change in the environment, then it should start at all levels. It should not be only that plastic bags are banned, no. It should be that everything, like I mentioned IPPs also should be considered. So, how about being selective about this, I don't understand this. So, I think it is the moment right now to set the foot down and to say that we are for a real change and we are supporting those who are bringing forward a new method, and for those who are bringing up new ideas.

So, it is more a collaborative approach that we need on behalf of Members of the other side of the side.

On this note, I wish to thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I wish to congratulate the hon. Minister for presenting such bold measures to the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Dr.Gungapersad, please!

(9.20 p.m.)

Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or): Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank all hon. Members of both sides who shared their views on this Bill. However, I am really sad to hear my predecessor taking this debate on a political arena, as if before this Bill, there was nothing done for the welfare of our environment, for nature, for ecology. I am sad, because we are sending the wrong signals to the population.

Climate change is one of the most serious and daunting challenges facing humanity. Climate change concerns and indubitably affects each one of us as it transcends all political and geographical barriers, whether we sit here or we sit there, whether we sit inside or outside this Parliament. This is what we have to drive to certain people, it is not only an environmental issue, but encompasses almost all human activities, ranging from economic activities to human health, infrastructural development to biodiversity, from our daily livelihood to the quality of air we breathe. There is hardly any aspect of life which is not directly or indirectly impacted by climate change. All of us are conscious that climate change has two main causes, that is, natural causes and manmade causes. While we have very little control on the natural causes, we can still respond to the manmade causes by voting laws, devising policies and changing our mind sets and adapting our lifestyle to be more nature and eco-friendly.

In Mauritius, before 2013, we were hardly conscious that flash floods or micro-climate are cruel realities that we have to live with. After 2013, we realised that we are living in a world which is extremely fragile and vulnerable. Natural calamities affect all of us, irrespective of our religious, political or economic background. That is why we should engage ourselves in a non-partisan way to address these climate crises and upheavals. Unfortunately, we should not forget how the flash flood of March 2013 was used to devise Machiavellian political slogans to score political mileage. It is sad and deplorable. In fact,

the objectives of the Bill are to make Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country, by making climate change policies and setting priorities for adaptation in agriculture, biodiversity, coastal zones, infrastructure, the port, marine environment, tourism, fisheries, water sectors and other relevant sectors and mitigation in energy, transport, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, forestry, land use, waste management and disposal and any other relevant sector.

If we want to ensure a sustainable socioeconomic growth, we need to address the climate change issue, both in our policies and approach. Don't we already have an armada of laws supposedly to safeguard our environment? Don't we have the Environment Protection Act 2002, which we could have been partially revamped and reviewed to suit our present needs? We are all conscious that we have done untold harm to our ecosystem, to our biodiversity, to nature at large because our modern lifestyle has pernicious effect on our environment, on nature and on the climate.

In Part III of the Bill, entitled Department of Climate Change, we have a long list of climate change objectives, that is, from (a) to (u). There are only 5 alphabets missing. Those who drafted the Bill could have added (v), (w), (x), (y), (z) to complete the list of alphabets. However, this long list is not going to provide us with a miracle recipe if we do not accompany them with real and genuine actions. The long list of objectives sadly highlights the gap between what the Government professes and what it ends up practicing. The main objectives of the Bill are to make Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country. The objectives of the Bill are meant to address the problem of climate change which is the result of global warming caused by excessive amount of greenhouse gases released in the atmosphere. I wonder whether the primary aim of the Climate Change Bill is not merely to satisfy our international obligations, that is, the UN Framework Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. How far does the Bill respond to our needs to address key climate related issues and challenges. We are all conscious that climate change affects the different spheres of human lives. Research has amply shown that climate change will adversely impact on global and local food production, severely and principally hit the poor and vulnerable.

Rise in global and local temperatures will create the optimal conditions for the emergence of new and more resistant viruses. Even if Mauritius contributes very little to the 140 million tonnes of global warming pollution worldwide into the atmosphere, we are not spared from the brutal and even fatal consequences of climate change on our tiny island. The

consequences of climate change and extreme weather events are increasingly becoming a major concern for the Republic of Mauritius.

There are other impacts which have been observed concerning climate in Mauritius. There is a lengthening of the intermediate dry season. The period of winter and summer has changed compared to previous years. In Mauritius, the key socio economic sectors which, *inter alia*, are most likely to be affected by climate change and sea level rise are -

- 1) Risks of regular and deadlier flash floods, cyclones, or prolonged periods of drought;
- 2) Destruction of coastal resources, erosion of coastal areas, rise in sea level;
- 3) Decline in agricultural production by 20%;
- 4) Fresh water resources may decrease by nearly 13% by 2050;
- 5) Decrease in fish and cattle production due to diseases - an increase in diseases which will affect human health and wellbeing and this will inevitably put a lot of pressure on health care sector;
- 6) Biodiversity will be affected due a decrease in pollination and proliferation of alien species;
- 7) More and more roads, public and private buildings and other infrastructure will be damaged due to climate change.

Over the past few decades, we have accumulated enough scientific evidence to show that our resource intensive patterns and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions inevitably lead to a greater scarcity of resources, an appreciable loss of biodiversity and a climate change that is already clearly showing disastrous effects on our lives.

Current patterns of production and consumption are not sustainable and are already responsible for problems that are complex to solve and interconnected with each other. This makes it a priority for political leaders and policymakers to find the most appropriate ways to introduce a new scenario for an ecological transition towards a more sustainable economic model.

The world today faces a challenge: in addition to developing sufficient capacities to improve wellbeing, providing decent employment, reducing inequality, combating poverty

and preserving the natural environment, it must also manage natural resources efficiently and responsibly in a sustainable way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I move on to Part II of the proposed Bill, entitled Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change. I refer to the Constitution and composition of the Council. The Council will be composed of 21 plus Ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister, practically the whole of the Cabinet.

My queries are the following -

- Who will be the secretary of this parallel Cabinet?
- Are we bypassing Cabinet procedures and approvals for projects?
- Is this a demotion of the current Secretary to Cabinet?
- Who is the future lucky person who is happily waiting in the corridors to be nominated as the Director of Climate Change?
- Who is the rare gem who will sit with all Ministers and Prime Minister and issue directives?
- On what basis will the Director of the Climate Change be recruited?
- What will be his/her salary and fringe benefits?

We note that the Director shall be -

- a) a public officer to be appointed by the Public Service Commission, and
 - b) be under the administrative control of the Supervising Officer.
- What would be the minimum qualifications and experience of the incumbent? I cannot see these details in the Bill. Has it be done deliberately to avoid the sad spectacle that we witnessed at the Mauritius Standard Bureau where, by hook or crook, Mrs S. B. had to be recruited even if she did not have the basic qualifications or experience in that related field.
 - Why the need to create a new post when you have so many directors in that Ministry? What will be the role and duties of the Director of Environment with the creation of the Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Director of Climate Change will be the one who will negotiate, manage and handle funds which will come from global environment funds and

other international organisations. Will the Director of Climate Change henceforth be involved in the Environment Impact Assessment process? Does it mean that there will be no Parliamentary Committee oversight on this Climate Change Council? How to guarantee accountability and transparency?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now refer to section 12 part (3) (b). The Climate Change Committee, consisting of 30 members, shall have to meet on a monthly basis and 17 members shall constitute a quorum - refer to Section 12(2). I find this as a bureaucratic bazaar.

We know how these Committees function. The law of diminishing return applies fully well in such cases. The first few meetings will be enthusiastically attended by the 30 members and gradually, it may even be postponed due to lack of quorum. Most of the 30 people on the Council are extremely busy people with tight professional and administrative schedules. Will they be able to attend meetings with tea and biscuits every month?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I suggest more NGOs, more members of the civil society, respected environment militants to be active members of the Climate Change Committee. We should make sure that bureaucracy does not paralyse the Climate Change Committee.

The real saviours of our environment are not necessarily those who sit in air con offices and engage in drafting (a) to (u) objectives to make Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country, as listed in the Bill, to avert climate change.

The genuine saviours of our environment are those who selflessly dedicate themselves to protecting our fauna and flora from the multiple onslaughts on nature.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not understand why the present Government tends to set aside previous initiatives undertaken or piloted by the previous Governments in order to come up with new Bills and laws.

I do not understand why there is no continuity in the multiple initiatives and measures undertaken in the past by different Governments, NGOs and individuals. Obviously, we can build upon what has been achieved.

- Isn't the Climate Change Bill a mere replica of the Environment Protection Act?
- What has been the contribution of the National Environment Commission operating on the Environment Protection Act?

- Where are the findings of the several studies and action plans developed under the UNDP?
- Will the new Climate Change Department be under the Ministry of Environment?
- Will it be separate from the Department of Environment which already has a Climate Change Unit?
- What budget will the Climate Change Department have?
- Who will prepare the national inventory on greenhouse gas emissions, given that several parties are expected to provide data?
- What about capacity building, training and working on standardising the methods which should be used to collect data?

If this present Government had not allowed itself to be led by its oversight political ego, it would have used the *Maurice Ile Durable* Green Paper as a Charter to initiate measures to mitigate the impact of climate change. But it opted to eliminate it for obvious political reasons. Really bad and sad for Mauritius. Is it true that the only crime for the *Maurice Ile Durable* was that it was piloted and implemented by the Labour Government? Announced in 2008, the creation of the MID was the Government's response to the energy crisis of 2007. It was *un projet de société*. The aim of *MID* was to facilitate economic growth that respects the limitations of natural resources, a growth that is delivered by an empowered population, able to grasp the new opportunities of a green economy; and able to distribute wealth equitably.

In April 2011, the *MID* came with a green paper, it was highly participatory, taking on board the aspirations of the society at large in order to create a strong sense of belonging to the nation. The goal of *MID* was to achieve sustainable development. Let me remind the House that a specific goal was set for each of the five 'Es' –

- Energy, to ensure that the Republic of Mauritius is the efficient user of energy with its economy decoupled from fossil fuel;
- Environment, to ensure sound environmental management and sustainability of our ecosystem services;
- Employment economy, to green the economy with decent jobs, offering long-term career prospects;

- Education, to have an education system that promotes the holistic development of all citizens. And I am happy to say that in 2011, as a Rector, I participated in that education sector, me and Rector Serge Ng Tat Chung. We were not in the field of politics at that time and we contributed a lot, and
- Equity, to ensure that all citizens are able to contribute to the Republic's continuing growth and share its combined wealth.

If we had continued with the road map chartered by the green paper of *MID* since 2011, we would have gone far in making Mauritius climate change resilient and a low emission country as proposed by the Climate Change Bill. We would not have lost so much of time which we cannot recuperate now. I salute all those Mauritians who came together and worked with dedication to make *Maurice Ile Durable* a reality. But the *MID* concept was crushed for purely political reasons. Is it because it was initiated by the Leader of the Labour party, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and chaired by my qualified friend, Osman Mahomed, that the *Maurice Ile Durable* had to be dismantled? Did not this Government throw the baby along with the bath water? This is so characteristic of this Government and today you come pompously with the Climate Change Bill as if it is the miraculous antidote to solve all environment related issues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my concerns regarding the present Climate Change Bill are numerous but above all legitimate. I want to know –

- How serious is this Government in its commitment to contain, mitigate or reduce carbon emission?
- How serious is this Government in striking a fair balance between the need to embark on the path of economic development without jeopardizing our ecosystem?
- How far have we reached with proper waste water management, drainage?
- How many times this Government has bypassed the EIA while pushing some of its mega projects, for example, the Metro Express?
- How can we trust the good faith of this Bill which is supposedly going to be climate change resilient and help Mauritius to become a low emission country?

- How serious can we take this Government when it envisages to be nature friendly or eco-friendly?
- Did this Government spare the vegetation in the wake of the massive destruction of the Metro Express project?
- Did the Government safeguard and protect *le jardin bijou* in Beau Bassin?
- Did the Government listen to the appeal to protect the Promenade Roland Armand in Rose Hill or the green space in front of Loreto Convent of Rose Hill?
- Have not some Members of the other side of the House who have turned their political coats now had different ecological ideologies some time back?
- How to trust that this Climate Change Bill is not mere gimmicks to please international agencies only?
- Did not the Minister of Environment approve the EIA permit for the construction of hotels on State Land near a Barachois, on a wet land surrounded by Mangroves and sand dunes?
- Is it because of this Climate Change Bill proposes the State Lands Act is amended in section 6 by adding the following new subsection (9) –
“(1A) A person to whom a lease is granted under subsection (1)(a) shall not alter or change any marsh, lake or sand dunes and mangroves of the *Pas Géométriques*.”
- Is the above amendment being made to allow the construction of a hotel in Les Salines, Rivière Noire by the French group Atalian?
- What provisions have been made by the Climate Change Bill to empower the public at large, NGOs to act as watch dogs to protect the environment?
- Why does not the Bill walk the talk and create a proper legal framework whereby the common citizen, the nature and environment lover to be encouraged to help to make Mauritius become climate change resilient and low emission country?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Climate Change Bill comes in the wake of the Wakashio Oil Spill. We all know how the Wakashio wreckage was managed or rather mismanaged. I would like to pay tribute to all the nature lovers, to all professionals and academicians, all

those people who always raise their voices whenever attempts are made to destroy the environment. I would like to salute those men and women, young and less young from all walks of life who stood up as one people and one nation to combat the nefarious effects of the oil spill in the wake of the Wakashio ecological disaster. These people, though not experts, flocked to Mahebourg and elsewhere to save whatever they could. They did not wait for any Climate Change Bill or Environment Protection Act to show their love and concern for their motherland and without their help and selfless contribution of volunteers, though they are not experts, have been seminal in averting, floating and avoiding a major ecological hazard in the wake of the Wakashio wreckage. Thank you lovely Mauritians and altruistic patriots! I salute all those unsung Mauritian heroes and heroines whose hearts bled when they saw tens of dolphins and other sea creatures dying or dead on our shores.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now move on ...

The Deputy Speaker: May I, hon. Dr. Gungapersad, just remind you that you have been debating for about 25 minutes, and I am minded to just keep it at a reasonable length, but please continue.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you for reminding me. On 06 March, in a PQ, I had asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change about the destruction of a wetland and proposed construction of villas at Melville, Grand Gaube and the latter had answered –

« En ce qui concerne la présence d'un tractopelle, d'un JCB sur le wetland, le contracteur a plaidé l'ignorance et il n'y a eu aucune trace du chauffeur du tractopelle lors de l'arrivée de la Police sur le site. L'enquête de la Police de l'Environnement suit son cours. »

The country will be happy to know what has been the outcome of the Police enquiry and personal follow-up carried out by the Minister.

Since there is time constraint, let me conclude. We do not have a ready-made or takeaway miracle recipe to make Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country but we have thousands of foot soldiers in our island who can, hand in hand, as one people and as one nation, Members on the other side of the House and Members on this side of the House can work together towards achieving this laudable goal. Let us unite our forces and competencies to make Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country.

To end, I would like to quote one stanza from one of my favourite Renaissance poets, which I both enjoyed studying and teaching. I refer to William Wordsworth, ‘The Tables Turned’ –

“One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can.
 Sweet is the love which Nature brings;
 Our meddling intellect
 Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:-
 We murder to dissect.”

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much! Hon. Ms Jutton, please!

(9.48 p.m.)

Ms T. Jutton (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Sorry, technology.

The Deputy Speaker: Take your time.

Ms Jutton: At the very outset, allow me to congratulate hon. Ramano, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste and Climate Change and his team under the visionary leadership of our hon. Prime Minister for crafting such a comprehensive piece of legislation.

And allow me to quote the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, who said that, “we will be destroyed by climate change, not the planet.”

Climate change is inevitable, but our response to it is not.

The climate challenges facing the planet transcend national boundaries, requiring urgent action from policymakers, businesses, organisations and communities to speed up the transition to a net zero future.

This is why climate action was a key theme at the World Economic Forum Meeting in 2020 in Davos. The Forum’s ongoing work on climate change includes Mission Possible,

which is a platform to help industries make the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The words of the then 17-year old climate change activist, Greta Thunberg to world leaders at the World Economic Forum, still echoes in our ears, as she said that entire ecosystems are collapsing, but while some chose to blatantly ignore her and even referred to activists like her as ‘prophets of doom’, and the United States choosing to opt out of the Paris Agreement. Just to recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the aim of the Paris Agreement in 2015 was to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change with the aim of keeping the global temperature rise below two degrees above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees. However, one cannot deny the words of this young activist as she said that the young generation is watching you and, indeed, the results are here today.

Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here in Mauritius, our youth matters, their voice counts. *D’ailleurs*, this is clearly reflected by the setting up of a National Youth Environmental Council under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office. Our youths can continue to aspire to having a healthy planet and a country as long as we have a leader who leads with conviction. As mentioned earlier today itself by the hon. Prime Minister, the National Youth Environmental Council will consist of 14 members, aged from 18-35, including representatives from several public institutions and NGOs. *D’ailleurs*, the call for application from NGOs has already been made in the Press. This Council will also be interactive and the mandate of this Council will be to advise and contribute to the National objectives and goals with respect to climate change, environment policies and supporting the SDGs, amongst others. The very purpose of setting up this Council is to hear the voice of our youths.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today we are discussing the importance a Climate Change Bill in the Anthropocene. Over the last 30 years, the world has lost 50% of the summer sea ice in the Arctic. The earth’s temperature has gone up about 1 degree Celcius, This, itself, has led to devastating consequences. The oceans are 30% more acidic than they used to be. We are witnessing drought-racked, flash floods, and more frequent massive fires. Human induced climate change is affecting life sustaining systems from the top of the mountain to the depths of the oceans, leading to accelerating sea level rise and shaking ecosystems and human security.

And I am a bit shocked to hear my hon. friend earlier, hon. Dr. Gungapersad, mentioning that it is only after 2013 that it was realised that climate change was so urgent,

whilst since 30 years there has been so much advocacy. And I, however, do agree with him that the most serious and daunting challenge affecting humanity today is climate change.

Hence, when I come to Mauritius, the Mauritian context, according to the World Risk Report 2020, Mauritius is ranked 53rd as the country with the highest disaster risk, but let me tell you that the Kyoto Protocol through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNFCCC, stipulates that Small Island Developing States, *c'est-à-dire*, SIDS, do not have any formal obligations to reduce their greenhouse gas emission. However, Mauritius, despite being a SIDS, acceded to the Kyoto Protocol and was the third country to submit its instrument of acceptance to the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Mauritius also ratified the Paris Agreement on 22nd of April 2016. I am saying all these because I heard hon. Dr. Gungapersad questioning whether today we are coming up with a Climate Change Bill or doing all this only to adhere to international protocol signed. Well, the answer is clearly no. He, himself, questioned the policy, the translation of policy into objectives and further into action. Well, let me remind him, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this Government is a Government of action and this Government means business. Let me remind him of the actions taken by this Government during *le mandat précédent et pour assurer la continuité, par exemple, la National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act en 2016, la Land Drainage Authority Act en 2017, la Local Government Amendment Act en 2018 et la Mauritius Meteorological Services Act en 2019*. And this commitment was also reflected from *les Assises de l'Environnement* held in December last year, and also the meeting of a National Network for Sustainable Development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moreover, as stipulated in our Government Programme 2020-2024, it was stated that a High-Level Inter-Ministerial Council will be set up and a new Climate Change Bill will be introduced, and *parole donnée, c'est parole sacrée*. And this Government, again, as I said earlier, means business, and today, we are having debates on this new Bill in this august House.

This Bill sets out the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change, yes, to be chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, to formulate national strategies and objectives; and, yes, the Ministry of Environment to be the national implementing entity for international funding; yes, having a Department of Climate Change, having a Climate Change Committee, having a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan for several sectors, such as agriculture, biodiversity, coastal zones, infrastructure, the port, the marine environment, tourism, fisheries and water, and even having a National Climate

Change Mitigation Strategy, which will be formulated in accordance to the National Development Priorities and aimed at achieving a low emission and green economy. All this reflects the pledge that this side of the House has taken to support SDG 13, which is about actually taking urgent action to combat climate change.

Mauritius has, indeed, pledged to abate the greenhouse gas emission by 30% by 2030. Moreover, this is also the decade for action as decreed by the United Nations.

This Bill will provide the foundation by establishing the legal framework required to transform Mauritius into a climate change resilient and low emission country. The United Nations has actually again reminded all nations that we have only this much time for meeting and implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is leaving no stone unturned.

According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the amount of plastic at the bottom of the sea is twice the amount on the surface of the ocean.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as stated in our Government Programme earlier, actions are already being taken in line so as to make Mauritius plastic-free. In October of this year itself, there have been mass sensitisation campaigns organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste and Climate Change. This Bill aims at strengthening the Government actions. It also tries to reduce the damage caused by lack of bold measures during 2005 to 2014.

Well, I wish to ask hon. Gungapersad: is it because the Climate Change Bill is being proposed by this Government that he has raised such comments with respect to the past instead of being constructive? Because the past is gone, we only have the present and the future. Is it because the Climate Change Bill is being brought by this Government that the hon. Member is questioning the seriousness of this Government? Well, again, let me tell him that this Government means business. This Bill is not only a national awakening, it is meant to proceed in a structured way with the support of one and all to tackle the escalating hot list of global environmental crisis.

This Bill will provide the framework through which Mauritius can contribute to the collective global asset to limit the increase in global average temperatures. The aim of the Government is to actually transform industries, economy and society so that we can rely more and more on renewable energy, obtain greater energy efficiency and reduce non-

renewable energy consumption. It paves the way to the adoption of advanced low-carbon technologies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me here to quote the hon. Ramano, *qui dit* -

“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.”

The reason why I am quoting this is because hon. Gungapersad again questioned earlier on actually the aim of this Bill and whether it is just legislation or whether it is actually converting legislation into action.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Gungapersad also mentioned about flash floods and erosions. Well, I have to remind him again that - maybe earlier, I think it was in the previous debate - we had hon. Hurreeram who lengthily explained about why the Land Drainage Authority was actually set up and the Act as well was enacted. Maybe I also have to remind the House about the ‘NEOC’ which was set up and the Act which was actually promulgated in 2016 by this very Government.

All this again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is because, on this side of the House, we are really concerned and this is why I invite Members on the other side of the House to collaborate and to stop wasting the time in futile discussions and demagogies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the challenge of living in an emission constrained world is the most powerful driver of innovation I can think of, creating new technologies, new industries and new jobs and I believe it is the greatest economic opportunity in, at least, this generation. The genuine attempt at consensus building during the process has shown that all parties recognise that climate change is too important for petty partisanship and politics.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, heat waves which is a manifestation of climate change causing warm water anomalies arising from the El Niño/Southern Oscillation and Indian Ocean Dipole have been causing considerable harm to the ocean and also causing coral mass bleaching. Mauritius is seriously threatened by climate induced bleaching.

According to report published by Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network in 2017, with increasing intensities and severities, all this has contributed to the significant decrease in live coral cover registered around Mauritius over the past decade and if we assume a constant rate of beach erosion then we can estimate a cumulative 50-year value of beach tourism and a revenue lost per year ranging from USD 2 m. to USD 100 m. in 2060. This is why it is time to act.

Moreover, Mauritius has been forecasted to become a water-stressed country by 2025 with its agricultural production falling by as much as 30% by 2050 but promoting a greener economy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill will open a whole domain to use new technologies and methods in the agribusiness to recycle nutrients and make maximum use of the resources available. This will also in turn provide more job opportunities.

Greening Mauritius is vital because if each country adopts sustainable practices we can curve down the disastrous effect of climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2014, it is predicted that there are systematic risks due to extreme weather events leading to breakdown of infrastructure networks and emergency services, loss of marine and coastal ecosystems, storm surges, coastal flooding and the slow disparition of our beaches, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tell you that after the research and after these reports, this Government did not just sit and watch.

For instance, in my Constituency, to mitigate the impact of climate change, sea level rise and frequent storm surges, the existing infrastructure along the coastal stretch in my Constituency from Pointe aux Feuilles to Rivière des Créoles is being reworked by the Ministry of Environment to prevent further damage. For instance, what is being done to adapt to the climate change impacts, control beach erosion and attenuate road inundations during storm surge as well as to reduce risks to public infrastructure? There is a huge project consisting of rock revetments, parallel off road parking facilities, perched sandy beaches, plantation of mangroves, landscaping and greening works as well as fining of seaward to cater for a walkway and cycling track all along the coastal region in my Constituency.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the Land Drainage Authority has also declared certain areas around Mauritius as flood prone and different projects are being set up and monitored by the LDA. For instance, in my Constituency, we have one at Nouvelle France which covers about five regions and the project will be done in different phases. I am pleased to announce that the financial clearance has just been received by the Ministry of Finance last

week and Phase I is about to kick-start. The second project which is at New Grove is also going on.

It is also important to note, as I mentioned earlier, that the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) is activated whenever there is a disaster or whenever there is any major crisis such as cyclone, torrential rain, etc. and even in cases of unexpected accidents. Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I repeat it, accident such as the MV Wakashio.

Indeed, when the bulk carrier vessel, MV Wakashio, ran aground on the reef of Pointe d'Esny, on the coast of Mauritius, the oil spill definitely will have an impact on our unique ecosystem. As hon. Dr. Gungapersad mentioned, yes, *ça fait mal au cœur, bien sûre!* But it is not us who invited it. As I mentioned earlier, it was an accident but what is important to note is what has been done since and what is being done.

And let me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, commend the enormous job accomplished from the Committee setup under the chairpersonship of the hon. Prime Minister himself with the collaboration of all stakeholders, especially the Ministry of Environment, the Local Government with the daily monitoring crisis committees as well as the Police, the Special Mobile Force and other such authorities and all other institutions which were there every day to monitor the situation. And not just to monitor but also take necessary actions to mitigate what has been caused by this uninvited accident. And with the collaboration of international countries, the United Nations and international experts, today, our lagoons, our beaches and marine ecological systems are being restored. Gradually, but surely!

And yes, hon. Dr. Gungapersad was right in thanking all the volunteers and all those who helped, who joined hands together to assist because when a crisis strikes, it affects all of us and unity above partisan politics is what counts, *alors que certains ont profité du malheur des autres pour faire de la politique de très bas niveau.* We all know of what I am referring about. Anyway! Combating habitat loss on multiple levels and in the marine ecosystem and restoration of coral reef structure is *sine qua non*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and this Bill capacitates such initiatives. I have, myself, personally met with several NGOs involved in the ecological restoration of reefs around Mauritius, and even in my Constituency, which have been affected by the MV Wakashio oil spill.

Let me tell you that the resilience-based management and the restoration approach involve the mass production of corals by combining traditional asexual propagation methods

with advances in sexual production of corals and there is a lot of new techniques which is being put *à l'avant* so as to be able to combat this climate change. This Bill will provide all the resources needed to effectively implement such programmes and provide a platform to aid the coral reef ecosystem rehabilitators, restorers and conservators around Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since hon. Dr. Gungapersad mentioned the MV Wakashio, I also wish to highlight the collaboration of the private sector in my Constituency to combat such climate change and unfortunate events. For instance, at the level of the Ciel Group, they believe that a sustainable development is desirable and needed. Their project at Ferney Valley reflects this philosophy. Ferney is in my Constituency which is about reconnecting with nature and embracing a zero carbon agenda and it already includes La Vallée de Ferney Conservation Trust, a public-private partnership between Ciel Group and the Government of Mauritius in collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation which has enabled the reintroduction of more than 35,000 endemic trees and 150 endemic birds in the Valley since 2007.

The Ferney Agri-Hub which recently launched this year to promote sustainable agricultural practices and participate in Mauritius Food Security Agenda as well as the Ferney Nature Lodge for further sustainable developments which are planned to fully integrate environmental and social components.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Jutton, just be mindful of the time.

Ms Jutton: Okay, I will just conclude. Well, to conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree with hon. Ms Anquetil who said that *le bouleversement climatique nous affecte tous* and as hon. Lobine also mentioned, each year matters. Well, each choice does. This is why we need to act now. I hereby commend this Bill to the House and urge Members on the other side of the House to leave behind petty quibbling for a better good. This planet belongs to us and it is our responsibility to protect it and leave a better world for our children and our generations to come. So, together let us all make our contribution in healing the planet as each action counts. It starts by you, it starts by me, it starts by us.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Nuckcheddy, please!

(10.13 p.m.)

Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. At the very outset, I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for this Bill, that is, the Climate Change Bill.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the need of the hour. I do not claim to be an expert in any of the issues and matters relating to climate change, however, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I decided to intervene on this Bill, I thought that I will just urge for a honest commitment from all of us in this House, from both sides, as this issue of climate change does not only concern us but may not concern us to the extent that it will concern the future generation if we take no action today.

But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we got a problem in this country. I just have to raise my head from here where I am sitting and I can see the problem right in front of me. Well, at this point in time, the majority of the seats are empty; there are only five of them. Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our major problem is our Opposition that we have today. This is the major problem of our country because at a time when the Government is coming with such an important Bill and hon. Hurreeram rightly pointed out the quotation of the former President of USA, Mr Obama who said –

“We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it.”

At such a crucial time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was really painful to listen to the Leader of the Opposition, coming with arguments like copycat, old wine in new bottle, etc. He even anticipates that *la montagne va accoucher d'une souris*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a few days ago, when we all learned that the US, which represents around 15% of global greenhouse gas emission, has now a new President. The very first thing that the whole world mentioned is that now the US will re-join the Paris Agreement.

The Economist of 02 November 2020 reported that over the past decade, climate change has gone from being a minority concern among voters to a key voting issue. A majority of American voters say climate change is a very important or somewhat important issue in determining how they will cast their vote.

The whole world, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is concerned about the climate crisis except for our hon. Members of our Opposition. This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is an

opportunity to make history recognise that once we had an Opposition who was wise to understand the need to address the climate crisis.

Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger made a request to young Members from this side of the House and I make a reciprocal request to all hon. Members on the other side of this House to stop being a problem and be more serious on this serious issue.

It was really shocking to see during his intervention that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was more concerned whether the Prime Minister and other Ministers will depone before the Court of investigation than the issue of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the *'L'Express'* paper of 14 October 2020 described in detail how the Leader of the Opposition acted as a good mediator in the clash between hon. Mohamed and hon. Assirvaden. The same article also reported, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, I quote –

“Mais de telle réaction ne profite ni au parti ni au pays.”

Hon. Dr. Boolell expressed his concern for this country. I will just urge to him, please, understand that this Bill is for our country. Instead of just listening to various NGOs and taking the comments of NGOs as the holy verses, he should rather listen to the international institutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me close this chapter by quoting from an interview of hon. Assirvaden of 25 February 2018, which was also published by *'Le Mauricien'* of 08 January 2019, under *'Questions et réponses choisies'*, and I would say, *c'est bien choisi*. To one of the questions, the hon. Member replied the following, and I quote –

« Les blessures de 2014 étaient profondes, étaient dues à des choix et des décisions du passé, et à des erreurs dans la gestion du pays. Il ne faut pas croire que tout cela sera oublié du jour au lendemain ».

And today, the same Labour Party is trying to give us lessons. We must look ahead like people all around the world are doing, Mr Deputy Speaker. You know, when Greta Thunberg was sailing to attend last year's Climate Conference, *'The Times'* of 23 December 2019 reported that while she sat in silence in the cabin of boat, while her lips were maintaining a silence, her eyes were showing a cyclone and there, she speaks quietly. We can't just continue living as if there was no tomorrow because there is a tomorrow; that is all we are saying.

Hon. Minister Ramano explained that the foundation of such a Bill was set back in 1992 at the time when Sir Anerood was the Prime Minister and he even implemented various measures well before the Summit of Rio. So, it is not right to say that this Bill is coming in a haste. This Bill is a prompt action against the World Risk Report published in 2018 which ranked us as the 16th country which is at risk of natural catastrophe. This Bill is to prevent floods like the one in 2013 where several of our fellow citizens lost their lives. It is a mitigating measure to avoid a deficiency of water in the new future. Details of research on climate have made it increasingly clear to the whole world that earth climate is changing and that these changes are in large part caused by human activities and it is only human behaviour that can address this issue.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, takes nexus from the Paris Agreement of 2015 where we were among the first countries to commit to reduce our carbon emission. The purpose of this agreement is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. Climate change is not only about polar bears and glaciers and it does not happen just because somebody else is burning more fossil fuels than we are, meaning that they should act first and we can follow later. It is not only about complying with the Kyoto Protocol or United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It has far more to do with the quality of life and with choices of every citizen of this globe. Its impact will be felt in Mauritius if not already being felt. Whatever proportion our greenhouse emission account may represent to the global emission, the impact of climate change brings significant risk for the future and perhaps some opportunities for each of us. We have a responsibility to do something about it, to manage that risk and to mitigate the damage in the most effective way. It is a scientifically proven fact that the climate is changing and humans are at least in part responsible. It is obvious that the consequences of that change and of climate variability are already being felt all over the globe, we are not an exception.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the climate crisis is steps ahead of us. The time to act was yesterday or maybe the day before yesterday. Impacts of climate change are being felt around the world and we can anticipate these to worsen over time if we do not act now. Like many Small Island States, Mauritius is vulnerable, especially to the effects of global warming and especially, the rise of sea levels. For us, climate change is existential; we strongly echo the call by so many, notably our youth for more actions and collaborations. There is a need for us, as politicians, to listen to the straightforward speaking of young Greta Thunberg who has dared to promote her views on the crisis arising from climate change. Our country and the

whole world are likely to face a considerable impact on the climate and we are called to participate actively in addressing the global climate challenge. My intention in this intervention is not to accuse or pinpoint or confront anybody. I sincerely believe that the whole mankind is guilty of the critical moment that we are presently living.

Climate impacts now and in the future increasingly challenge the adaptive capacity of society and ecosystem and there is an urgent need for immediate reduction in greenhouse gas emission. Such immediate reduction will provide the world with more space for cost effective and sustainable mitigation and adaptation options. Immediate reductions will generate opportunities for investment in innovation and technologies for higher productivity in energy and resource fuels, in alternative technologies for a world free of human cause greenhouse gas emission and for investment in knowhow for achieving equitable transitions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel that in order to really understand the importance of this Bill, let me first point out to this House that a report was conducted by World Meteorological Organisation in October 2019 and the title of that report is 'State of the Climate in Africa'. This report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, treats the issue of sea level on page 11, where it says that the global mean sea level has risen since the early 1990s with an average rate of 3.2 mm per year and an acceleration of about 0.1 mm per year. However, the rate of rise is far more regionally uniform. In some areas of the oceans, the rate is between two and three times higher than the global mean as measured by satellite ultimately. What is really a matter of concern for us in that report is where our region is placed as an area where the rate of sea level rise is above the global mean of 3.5 to 4 mm per year. In fact, Mauritius is situated in an area where the sea level is rising by more than 5 mm per year.

This Bill sets the objectives of implementing with a view to address the adverse effects of climate change and development Mauritius into a greener economy. Our country has the obligation under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and all the related instruments on climate change. This Bill is taking all the recommendations into consideration and which makes it different from the Environment Protection Act 2002. It is not the old wine in new bottle, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will request the Leader of the Opposition to have a closer look at it and even taste it and he will see that the wine and the bottle are both new.

Climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, heating the most vulnerable hardest and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement and stress on

water resources. In recent months, we have seen devastating floods, now face the looming spectre of droughts because of a La Niña event. The human and economic toll has been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his opening speech of the COP 25, the tier of the inter-governmental panel on climate change, Mr Hoesung Lee, reminded the participants that the prediction on the greenhouse gas emission to start to peak from this year has been proved wrong as the emissions are continuing to increase with no sign of peaking soon. He also added, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the impacts of the of current warming are much more severe than previously understood, for example, accelerating sea level rise and ocean warming, some key ecosystems becoming much more vulnerable and increasing risks of reaching limits to adaptation.

In spite of climate change being a pressing existential threat, so far only a series of long-term grand targets have only been set and few have concentrated on policies needed to achieve them. But this Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does not only set these policies, but also proposes a legal framework towards making Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country. The most important aspect of the Bill is the conduct of an annual inventory of greenhouse emission by sources and removal by sinks. This is important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as it will allow to provide a real picture of the evolution as we are here not talking of locally but this is an issue which concerns the whole globe. We must in all case avoid unreal figures like some developed countries have been claiming they have reduced their CO₂ emission by 42% since 1990. However, what they do not say is that this reduction by 42% is because these countries have exported their coal fire generating, manufacturing abroad especially in China and Africa and failing to count the carbon cost of importing goods and food by ship and air. It is only recently that it has been seen that if these emissions are taken into consideration, the reduction is only 15%, that is where we must tread cautiously and the Bill proposes an organogram which will prevent misleading figures. The inter-ministerial council on climate change will make climate change policies and set priorities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and monitor and review the progress made by Government Departments. There will be a Department of Climate Change which shall develop policies, programmes and action plans relating to climate change and coordinate research relating to climate change. There will be a setting up of a Climate Change Committee which shall coordinate the preparation of reports relating to climate change and the implementation of activities related to greenhouse gas inventories, greenhouse gas

emission reduction, climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation to climate change and annual inventory of greenhouse emission by sources and removal by sinks will also be conducted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, increasing temperatures and sea levels, changing precipitation patterns and more extreme weather are threatening human health and safety, food and water security and socio-economic developments all around the world. Despite that, Mr Speaker, Sir, the climate change is a global concern, its impacts are felt at the regional and local levels and it is at these levels that actions adapt to it and mitigate its effects are required. That is why I said earlier that the annual inventory is an important aspect of this Bill as it will be a medium for the Government to provide to itself an individual access to science-based knowledge that is regularly updated and derived from robust data.

The international community recognises almost universally that climate change could potentially result in serious challenges for human security and national security. Failure to achieve such immediate emission reductions will give the world the opposite of all this. In addition to the cascading impacts of a worsening climate, the world will suffer from its stranded assets. The legacy of business as usual is investment. The financial sector above all will face greater uncertainty due to this from climate change and climate change policy. Food security will be threatened as a result of worsening climate and increased competition for land arising from the need to use land as vehicle for mitigation options.

The world will face increased risks of losses of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the sustainable development goals such as no poverty, zero hunger and life on land will be compromised. There will be little room for ecosystem based adaptation, blue carbon ecosystem, sustainable fisheries and sustainable land management as these adaptations options are effective only under low emission pathways.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will urge upon this august House to please understand and appreciate the intent and also the objectives of this important Bill and extend full support. We are in a climate to change the climate change. This is what I want to appeal this House. Let's support this Bill so that Greta Thunberg, instead of shouting of 'how dare you?', she will say 'I thank you.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, this Bill is to prevent the killing of the planet and, as it is said, there is no planet B, let's not forget that.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Joanne Tour, please!

(10.33 p.m.)

Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a young parliamentarian it is with immeasurable concern that I address this august Assembly to intervene on the debates pertaining to the Climate Change Bill.

With fluctuating weather patterns, sea level rise, increase in droughts and floods and uncertain climate outlooks, the world's most vulnerable population facing ever-increasing risks, food and security, climate change is striking harder and more rapidly than expected. According to the latest World Risk Report 2020, the last five years are on track to be the warmest on record. Natural disasters are becoming more intense and more frequent and last year has witnessed unprecedented extreme weather throughout the world. Alarming, global temperatures are on track to increase by at least 13 degrees Celsius toward the end of this century. Twice what climate experts have warned is the limit to avoid the most severe economic, social and environmental consequences. The impacts of climate change will add up to a planetary emergency that will include loss of life, social and negative economic impacts. In fact, we have 52 small island developing states across the world, though they have the specificities, their pace of development varies. They all share the deep vulnerability towards the forcing impacts of climate change.

The latest Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states, and I quote -

“The phenomenon of global warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to the high risk of severe widespread and irreversible impacts globally where the small island development states will be particularly vulnerable.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the situation is not as bad as we thought it is. It is worse and it is a critical time for the world. No country, however big or small, rich or poor, can flee the devastating effects of climate change. Every coast line is threatened by the rising sea level. The storms are more and more violent creating havoc where they hit, the effect of more frequent droughts are vanquishing nations where hunger already thrive. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, a global crisis has shocked the world. It is causing an alarming number of deaths, making people afraid to leave home and leading to economic hardships. Its effects are rippling across the world. Obviously, I am talking about COVID-19, but in just a few

decades, the same description will fit another global crisis, climate change. As awful as this pandemic may appear to be currently, climate change could be worse if we do not act swiftly and boldly. The threat of climate change is real. Global temperatures will continue to rise with decades to come. The Northern Hemisphere, the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea have experienced greater warming than the global average. The best climate change scientists in the world are predicting that extreme weather events like cyclones are likely to become more powerful. The former President of America, Obama, once said: “when you combine stronger storms with rising seas, this is a recipe for more devastating floods” Over the last hundred years, the sea has risen by 25 centimetres. Much of this rise in sea level is related to the rising air temperature. Subsequently, as the air warms up so does the sea water and simple laws of physics will tell us as water gets hotter it expands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moreover, the increase in greenhouse gas emission produced by human activities added to the rise of global temperatures is greatly impacting on the health of people leading to an increase in death and illness from heat stress, heat stroke or cardiovascular and kidney diseases. Similarly, as the air pollution gets worse, more and more people are suffering from respiratory complications.

The World Health Organisation is adamant that climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 deaths yearly between 2030 to 2050. The climate change is a global phenomenon which has no borders or geography. The negative impact of global development can be seen with shrinking glaciers, ice on rivers and lakes. The increasing temperature and heat waves accelerated sea level rise amongst others. The environmental costs due to climate change are likely to spike significantly if left unattended. Small islands developing, of which Mauritius is one of them, are more prone to ill effects of the climate change such as risks of death and disrupted livelihood caused by natural calamities; extreme weather causing breakdown of infrastructure, loss of marine coastal ecosystem and food security linked to warming droughts, floods, precipitation variability and weather extremes. It is vital for a beautiful country like Mauritius to espouse the necessary legal framework and policies to address and mitigate the effects of climate change. The tourism sector is an important one with the latter contributing about 25% directly and indirectly to the GDP and Mauritius cannot afford such risks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our country is already very much exposed by many environmental hazards such as coastal, river and rain induced flooding, tropical cyclones and storm surges. The battering received from many of these hazards can make our island

particularly vulnerable to other changes. Knowing the existing risks and how they are changing should help us for the future hazards. In particular, it is important to understand how existing vulnerabilities could exacerbate the impacts of the environmental hazards and what can be done to reduce the threat of disaster. Henceforth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the future development of Mauritius should be carried out harmoniously within a well-established climate change framework.

The Climate Change Bill, presented to Parliament by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, attends to such objectives. With a view to addressing the adverse effects of climate change and developing Mauritius into a greener economy, the obligations of Mauritius, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement and any other related instrument on climate change should be implemented towards making Mauritius a climate change resilient and low emission country.

In this respect, the innovative Climate Change Bill takes Mauritius to a higher level of environmental consciousness. The Climate Change Bill has made provisions for the setting of an Inter-Ministerial Council on Climate Change with well-defined functions and powers to monitor and recommend measures to contain the ill effects of climate change, and enforce its resilience against the climate change backdrops. A well-manned department of climate change will be set up and manned by Director and staff to implement decisions of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the efforts of the Government towards a sustainable paradigm shift. A sustainable development and tackling climate change should go hand in hand. We will not keep people from hunger without protecting our food system. We will not be able to ensure sustainable cities and communities without protecting them from cyclones or floods and we cannot ensure children are healthy without addressing the changes in vector-borne diseases due to changing temperatures and the list goes on.

The will of the Government to encourage the use of clean renewable energy more extensively and to encourage carbon free energy generation by accelerating the development of renewable energy to reach 25% in 2025 and 40% in 2030, amongst other measures, are laudable. In the end, action on climate change is necessary for sustainable development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is hope. Youngsters are more and more concerned by the cause of climate change. We must encourage youngsters to carry their studies in climate

change. The crisis we are facing together is an opening to bring young people into the conversation. Creating the future we all want requires older and younger generations to work together for the change we need. Young people are hungry to take part. Older people, who hold the political reign economic and intellectual powers today, must listen to the voices of change, support new ideas and innovation and rethink the assumptions about the way the world works because the world will not be ours forever, no discussion of our younger generations' future should take place without them sitting at the same table.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is really sad to see that Members on the other side of the House have not yet realised the emergency of the situation. *L'heure est grave*. No places for criticism. Instead of using their words to only describe what has not been done and what should be done, *le verre à moitié vide*, they should use their voice to make a difference. I believe in small daily iteration. If every single one of us will make the effort to keep our doorstep clean, the world will be immaculate. If every single one of us would make a simple move towards climate change, it would be approximately 1.2 million acts on our island only.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although SIDS annual output of GHG (Greenhouse Gas) is insignificant, less than 1% of total global emissions, we cannot be complacent and the Government is leaving no stone unturned to bring GHG emission under control. We are doing our level best to shift our energy production from fossil fuels to cleaner sources of energy, promote fuel efficiency, create smart cities and eco building to make our island cleaner, greener and safer.

The fight against climate change has just become far more urgent and can become the greatest challenge for survival of mankind ever. The evidence is clear, climate change is now occurring faster. The acceleration of global warming is nearly unstoppable unless we act now and unless we act ambitiously together, planet earth, nature and us. We are all linked in such a subtle and clever way that we do not even know how lucky we are until the planet changes. No matter how much we are as an advanced species, we cannot survive without a healthy planet and yet we are punching holes in our safety nets day by day. So, what can we do? In our own daily lives, we can make sustainable choices by using less plastics, curbing our food wastes or opting for eco-friendly and sustainable sourced products. Our choices have and can make an impact.

We must speak up as consumers, as citizens; use our voice to encourage businesses and our Government to shift to more sustainable policies and practices. We should spread the

word, encourage our family and friends to join. Together, we can be the generation that changes our relationship with the planet for the better.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is with pride and honour that I am supporting the Climate Change Bill and I invite my colleagues from both sides of the House to do the same.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the road to mitigate the effect of climate change is likely to be a challenging one. We will only reach its destination if all stakeholders work hand-in-hand together with our shared interest in mitigating the effects of climate change, being the unifying factor.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude by stating that we cannot achieve our ambition in increasing our climate resilience and ensure the economic and infrastructural development without a clear roadmap. The Climate Change Bill enunciated by the hon. Minister of Environment charts a clear path for the future of our country. Through this Bill, Government has clearly expressed its firm intention to play its role fully as a facilitator to achieve sustainable development and shift from a vulnerable island and make Mauritius more climate-resilient. It is now up to all stakeholders to assume their responsibilities. This Government, through implementation of the measures in this Bill, will make a significant and ambitious contribution to the global efforts towards attaining the goal set by international community to combat climate change. We need to ensure that our efforts are integrated and our actions are harmonised. It is only then that we will ensure a legacy for our future generation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a parliamentarian, as a mother, as a patriot, I urge everyone of us that we need to be totally committed and we need to act now. Today, we are taking a very important step towards a transitional journey that will take us from a vulnerable island to a resilient island State. The journey will be long and laborious. Let us, therefore, resort to work tirelessly so as to achieve our common goal, an island that can absorb the shock of climate change through resiliency and build a future worthy for our children.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your kind attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much! Hon. Wochit, please!

(10.50 p.m.)

Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the Climate Change

Bill. Climate change is one of the greatest economic and environmental challenges of our time. Phenomena like El Niño and La Niña have already been causing dramatic fluctuations in the weather conditions across the world and these conditions have been worsened by the impact of human activity, especially our dependency on fossil fuel, thereby causing an increase in greenhouse gas emission, in particular carbon dioxide.

Climate change has impacted the world in numerous ways and a tropical island like Mauritius is not exempted from its impact. Heavy rainfalls, flash floods, intense cyclones and long periods of drought accompanied by heat waves appear to be the norms to expect in the coming years, or even months. In line with our commitment to honour the Paris Agreement on climate change, it is imperative to come forward with measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, especially, the stabilisation of greenhouse gas emission and limiting temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Mauritius signed and ratified the Paris Agreement on 22 April 2016 and pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emission by 30% by 2030. We are already in 2020 and not much has been done to honour our commitment. This Bill should have come earlier, but better late than never. It is therefore urgent to take immediate action in responding to the impact of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have recently witnessed some of the effects of climate change in Mauritius. In areas such as Cottage, Fond du Sac, Mon Goût, D'Epinay, Terre Rouge, and other various areas in my constituency, people are living in fear, in fear of having to experience another December 17 2018. I have spoken to several inhabitants of my constituency about this issue and one testimony that has really shocked me was the testimony of Fatima who has lost all her belongings and rendered her house uninhabitable. I have spoken to people who were present during the flash flood that occurred at Le Five football ground, Terre Rouge, and their testimonies were shocking. Imagine wanting to spend some time playing football and in only 20 minutes, the whole pitch was submerged with water and cars were floating all over the place. How can we allow our Mauritians to live in such fear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

On the other side, we have already witnessed lengthy drought periods which resulted in severe cut in water supply throughout the island. Fortunately, the heavy rainfall which came thereafter brought relief to the population. But for how long can we rely on the nature? Just imagine the catastrophic situation if there is no rainfall for several months. In addition to these phenomena, intense cyclones and the rising sea level will inevitably cause degradation of our ecosystem and adversely affect our lives. Are we therefore prepared to face such

calamities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The Bill, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, on last Tuesday bears similarities, both in some of its contents and its objectives with the Environment Protection Act of 2002. I am, therefore, unable to understand the real motive behind a new Bill. It would appear that a new organisation will be created under the umbrella of the Ministry of Environment which will be responsible for the preparation of a national strategy and Action Plan. However, the Bill itself does not provide details of how Government is going to address the concern of climate change. I hope that the new organisation does not become another useless entity just to please and to place *les petits copains*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the importance of the subject matter of climate change, it is essential that all stakeholders be involved, in particular, the civil society and the local authorities so that there is a consensus on the proposed measures and there will be a coordinated approach to addressing the effects of climate change.

Having been associated with Local Government, I would suggest that local authorities be actively involved in this endeavour since the issue of climate change does not concern only the Central Government. Here, I would like to say that our local authorities which consist of Municipalities, District and Village Councils could play a major role in climate change adaptation by creating awareness and sensitising the local community on issues related to the preservation of the environment. Local authorities are closer to the local community and can play a greater role in the process of climate change. For instance, we are all aware that the present system of disposal of domestic waste generates methane, which is a stronger greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, and on a weight basis, has 21 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. One practical way to reduce the level of greenhouse gas emission through local authorities would be the introduction of waste sorting and recycling, thus, applying the three R's system; Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, as local authorities are also responsible for both the collection and the disposal of waste.

Also, to mitigate the effect of increasing level of carbon dioxide, we need to establish more green areas through planting programmes. In this endeavour, local authorities should manage their own plant nurseries to better assist our citizens to carry out and increase plantation activities. I am referring to the coastal region like Grand Sable, Rivière Noire, Melville, Poudre d'Or among others, who have been affected by soil erosion and there is an urgent need to carry out terracing activities by planting mangroves, vetiver, bambous and other plants so as to restore a green belt area in line with afforestation programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a strategic plan to deal with climate change deserves all the seriousness and professionalism as it concerns the sustainability of our future generations. The measures should therefore be specific and achievable within a given time frame. However, we also need to address critical issues immediately. I am again referring to the recent flash flood which continues to cause distress and suffering to our citizens. Land slide and water logging are the other consequential result of floods. The construction of additional drain is not the appropriate solution. Our drainage system which dates back to colonial years needs to be completely redesigned. In the same vein, our sewerage system needs to be extended. Presently, only 29% of the Mauritian population is connected to the sewerage system while the rest are connected to septic tanks which overflow during heavy rainfall, causing an increase in the risk of propagation of diseases.

Mauritius, being a Small Island Developing States, is more vulnerable to natural calamities. With the predicted growing intensity of cyclones in the future and to ensure our resilience, we need to take bold policy decision as to the types of buildings to be constructed. We have not witnessed an intense cyclone since 1994 when Cyclone Hollanda devastated Mauritius. We can imagine what will happen to the construction of light structure, especially on the coastal area if we are hit by an intense cyclone.

COVID-19 is already affecting the tourism industry, an intense cyclone will certainly add to the distress in the tourism sector. So, it is important for the Government to start acting now for the welfare of our future generation as Mauritius is heavily dependent on the tourism industry. It is clear that both private and public organisation must cater for preserving the landscape, environment, heritage and attractions to encourage tourists to continue choosing our Island as their preferred holiday destination. Many tourists' activities are dependent on the climatic condition which is one of the factors for tourists when selecting their travel destination.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another area of concern is the rising sea level. An increase in sea level and sea water temperature has been shown to cause coral bleaching and ultimately leads to destruction of coral reefs. It is, therefore, essential that coastal protection works be carried out to prevent further damage in areas affected by erosion. We all know that in some years Maldives Island will disappear under the sea water. The coastal area of Mauritius, sooner or later, will also undergo the same fate. New planning guidelines therefore need to be issued by the local authorities for construction of residences and hotels in coastal zones. We are already witnessing extreme temperatures, that is, very cold winters and increasingly hot

summers. This situation is already affecting the agricultural sector. Plantations are becoming more prone to diseases and several planters are already complaining of plant diseases which have been attributed to new types of pathogens and which are becoming more difficult to treat.

With the industrialisation of our country and decline in the area of land devoted to agriculture, the small planting community is likely to suffer more and the population at large will become more affected. We, therefore, need to plan for the effect of climate change on the impact of agricultural production and ensure that the population will not only have good quality agricultural produce but our food security in terms of basic agricultural food is assured.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to reduce greenhouse gas emission which is crucial for our future generation, it is hoped that there will be more investment in green projects to improve our resilience to climate change. We should maximise on the issue on the use of renewal energy, in particular, solar energy for producing electricity rather than relying on dirty fossil fuels. To that effect, household should be given additional fiscal incentives to generate their own electricity from solar panels. Local authorities and public buildings should, as well, set up the example by investing in solar system to reduce their electricity bills. In the same line, I also suggest that electric cars, light vans, electric bikes and scooters be completely exempted from custom duties and VATs and incentives such as trade-in options be given to acquire these electric vehicles.

To lower our greenhouse gas emission, I am also suggesting that the regulations make provision for placing a monetary price on carbon pollution to action aim at shifting away from dirty fossil fuels toward cleaner and smarter energy options.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some of the proposals which I have mentioned are already in line with the concept of “*Maurice Ile Durable*”, which was introduced in 2008 by the then Prime Minister, who, among other measures, announced the transformation of the environmental landscape of Mauritius. Unfortunately, since 2014, it would appear that the *MID* programme has been set aside. If this Government would have continued with the implementation of the measures as suggested by a Steering Committee set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Renewal Energy and Public Utilities, in particular measures towards protecting the environment, building energy independency, promoting recycling, our country would have already been ahead in the fight against global warming and climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, we are already late with taking the legislative measures to mitigate the effect of climate change. To achieve the objectives set out in this Bill, it is, therefore, essential that the Minister responsible for the subject matter of climate change, to come up with well drafted and comprehensive regulations under section 29 of the present Bill to implement the policy measures in a timely and effective manner. In this regard, I suggest that the Director of Environment and other qualified and experienced technicians already responsible for executing the EPA 2002 be entrusted with the duties of implementing the Climate Change Bill instead of creating a new Department. If need be, experts from other sectors can also be co-opted to provide support to the Committee.

Finally, Government should also ensure that there is proper coordination throughout all level of Government to effectively address the challenges posed by the effect of climate change. It is only then that there will be a strong and sustainable socio economic development which can reduce our vulnerability to climate change and ensure that we become a climate resilient country.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Léopold, please!

(11.07 p.m.)

Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I have to thank here the hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and his office for bringing such an important piece of legislation to this House as we are altogether in this, as it is a case for action just like COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of distraction from our most urgent priorities and climate change as well is causing distraction from our urgent priorities. That is why we will need to adapt to those distractions. Therefore, I am glad that I have been given such opportunity to discuss on this Bill tonight because I am participating in the beginning of the end to debate on whether climate change is real.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will put an end on discussion onto whether or not climate change is real. This Bill will allow us to put in place strategies and move beyond discussion and debates about climate change and to look on how to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change; building resilience by identifying the contributing factors of

climate change, improving our research capability and bringing together all intervention steps.

Everyone of us has noticed the effect of climate change on our country, on our region. We are experiencing more storms, more floods, more droughts, sea level rise with risks of tidal surges causing change to our ecosystems, housing and infrastructural problems.

We have noticed the increase in temperature, precipitation changes and extreme weather events are real and growing. We have noticed that. Anyone can notice that without being an expert or a scientist. All the threats caused by the drastic change of weather pattern need to be given careful attention. I have to highlight here that this is one of the Bills which is nonpartisan and climate change is a concern to everyone. It is a global effort for preserving our planet by taking actions so as to make our environment more sustainable. Therefore, after the debate we will all come to make a conscience vote as this Bill is not only for conformity to international treaties, it also reflects the desires of our nation.

With climate change, many people of all Constituencies of the Republic of Mauritius feel that their way of life and future is under threat. Therefore, we urgently need plans to protect our communities and ensure our posterities. The Act, therefore, will have to ensure that there are adequate provisions so that they are equitable, transparent and science-based plans to address the impact of climate change, prevent the worsening consequences and take advantage of economic opportunities that climate change brings into a greener economy.

This is what I hope this Bill will bring, Mr Deputy Speaker, that is, a National Climate Change Risk Assessment led by experts, which will be able to help Government and related organizations in adaptation planning process for the protection of our community, our ecosystem and for the development continuum in such a manner that organisations can promote development that are more resilient, more sustainable and efficient; monitoring of targets of which our country is obliged to follow and, most importantly, independent climate change monitoring structure to ensure close oversight and to sensitize whether those policies are reaching the target.

Another important aspect that this legislative framework must look at is the effect of climate change on agricultural production as climate change has the potential of disrupting agricultural production and, therefore, affecting our ability to produce food.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, needs to enhance a 'no-regrets' approach by promoting adaptation and mitigating measures that have positive return on productivity, profitability, environment biodiversity, risk reduction and future adaptability.

This Bill must also allow climate change education, environmental education, climate change and scientific literacy, education for sustainable lifestyles and consumption, climate education for sustainable development, education for adaptation, education for mitigation to the wider public so that everyone knows the adapting strategies.

This Bill is about making our planet healthier, breathable; therefore, measures need to be taken to empower our youth and to make them more optimistic to the fact that greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced. We need to make our youth to take climate change seriously by using this legislative framework to demonstrate actions taken to reduce greenhouse gases by innovation and technological changes in reducing gases which increase atmospheric temperature.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, adaptation to climate change implies involvement, coordination and cooperation of different sectors and actors. The provision made in this Bill for the formulation of climate change strategies within the administrative structure of the autonomous island of Rodrigues will allow the regional Authority to focus on local tangible and actionable aspects of sustainable development where specific vulnerability areas can be identified then integrate them into national strategic plan for action.

We are taking all these measures because, even though we are not big polluters but our aim, as a Rodrigues Regional Assembly, is to achieve and make Rodrigues an ecological island at a targeted time, using 100 % renewable energy, energy from wind, tidal waves and sun, which is achievable in Rodrigues. We have all that in Rodrigues.

To start with, we are doing a pilot project which is called Éco-village at Rivière Coco in Rodrigues where we are starting to use all the ecological measures in line with respect to the environment and sustainable development by using zero chemicals, using energy from renewable sources. We are already doing that in Rodrigues so as to make Rodrigues, in the future, a 100% ecological island by using, as I have said, 100% renewable energy. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this legislative framework is so important to us because it secures long-term policy and planning on climate change. The Climate Change Act which allows the enactment of obligation under international treaties will go to the centre of our obligation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and

other international agreements. I am therefore giving my full support to this legislation, this Bill.

I thank you for your kind attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. We will break for some 15 minutes, please.

At 11.19 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 11.45 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please, be seated!

Hon. Dr. Ramdhany, please!

Dr. A. Ramdhany (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister Kavi Ramano for coming up with such an important Bill as our environment is one of our most intrinsic assets and if we want to leave a decent and safe world for the future generations, then making provisions as proposed in this Bill is the key for the long-term development of Mauritius. I am happy to notice the disparity in the attendance of Members of this National Assembly. On this side of the House, you can see the passionate Members who are present here and defenders of nature who are ready to give notes about how to conserve our environment.

Allow me to start with a quote from Lady Bird Johnson -

“The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share.

This quote illustrates that it is the job of each person to contribute, to protect Mother Earth and especially to empower youngsters and bright minds who feel more concerned than ever and are resorting to innovative ideas. Something that our Prime Minister has accounted for, hence I would like to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for coming up with the proposal of the National Youth Environment Council where youngsters will be the main actors on the subject on conservation of the environment.

I salute all those volunteers who helped during the MV Wakashio disaster and this was a strong call of action of the population to show their concern in the conservation of the environment. I am sure that we can count on the support of the population for the implementation of this Bill and especially from the people of my Constituency.

Two days back, I was having a conversation with a young ecologist, where I understood their passion and contribution in the hard work they are doing to save the marine ecosystem. It is refreshing to see all the support this Government is providing through different channels such as committees and institutions in order to further assist anyone or any project in favour of the environment. Coming back to my conversation with the young marine biologist, he said, "If we do not act now and welcome innovation, the next few generations will only be able to see fish or coral in archive videos only."

As a father and someone who loves nature, this, indeed, reveals the dire need for such Climate Change Bill. Some of the examples of climate change effect that severely impacted Mauritius over the years have been heat waves, drought, flood, melting iceberg, rising sea level, erosion, ocean acidity and decreased agricultural yield.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should emphasise that these are only a few of the thousand effects of the climate change in Mauritius. There is a need for immediate action. My Constituency does have flood prone areas, and I am referring to Fond du Sac. It is with great pleasure that I inform this House that the construction of drains and canalisation of water during heavy rainfall is on the right track. The locals are showing their satisfaction towards this development, as once it is completed, this will save them from hardship that they have been endured repeatedly.

Related to this effect of climate change, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Constituency, which finds itself along the northern coast, has been severely affected by heat wave arising from the El Nino and La Nina since 1998, exterminating large populations of our corals and, again, in 2016, we faced another catastrophic heat wave, which led to massive coral bleaching.

According to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network in 2017, the recurrent bleaching events, with increasing intensities and severities, has contributed to significant decrease in live coral cover registered around Mauritius over the past decade (i.e., it was 50% in 2002, and now it's 20% in 2016). With the ongoing rise in the water temperature, we are at risk of losing all our coral population. These corals are known to be the key stone species, which means that they support the whole marine ecosystem. Losing them means a collapsing marine ecosystem and it won't be long before we lose all our marine species.

Long ago, we had several healthy colonies of beautiful coral reefs in the lagoon of Pointe aux Canonnières, Pereybere, Bain Boeuf, Cap Malheureux and Grand Gaube, but, now,

with the rising sea temperatures, our corals are dying since they may not survive beyond a specific temperature threshold. We can witness the bleaching of coral reefs with the decreasing rate of fish caught by fishermen in our waters. Based on the marine food chain, it is known that each organism occupies an energy level or trophic level where corals provide food and shelter to small fish, and these small fish are preyed upon by larger fish which, in turn, are preyed by bigger fish. It is essential to preserve all the species in the food chain as they are all vital for the sustainability of the marine ecosystem.

This Bill will highlight the important role played by all stakeholders in order to counter the climate change and its impact on our environment, economy and society as a whole. The Climate Change Bill will also provide a platform to aid the reef ecosystem rehabilitators, restorers and conservators around Mauritius.

I have personally met with local NGOs comprising of young, passionate and highly qualified personnel, with the support of local and international expertise in the reef restoration programme. There are combining traditional asexual propagation method of coral with advances in the sexual reproduction of corals. They are bringing novel and proven technique with the goal to increase the genetic diversity of transplanted corals so as to combat the future stresses around arising from the Anthropocenes and the climate change.

Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill has been prepared in such manner that attention has been given to a specific cause, which will ease to protect the environment from the climate change and, in order to do so, this new Bill provides the appropriate platform where key stakeholders like the Inter-Ministerial Committee, NGOs and research institutions will be working together so as to come up with more innovative ideas and results.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this House stands today to approve a Bill on climate change that aims on bringing cultural change so necessary in the interest of the Mauritian economy and the population, which will be our building blocks in the global climate change objective. We all have a serious responsibility, both social and political responsibility, to provide, through the different sections of this Bill, mechanism for adaptation and mitigation in face of the serious environmental and climate change challenges. We have a duty to leave a legacy of development sustainability to future generation. I am pleased to note that this Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, also has a specific provision proposing to amend the *Pas Géométriques* Act against any alteration of marshy land, existing lakes and sand dunes, as well as mangroves.

My Constituency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has a long stretch of *Pas Géométriques* from Ile d'Ambre to Mont Choisy, and the localities thereat are already under undue pressure resulting from human activities. I welcome the provision to amend the Planning and Development Act, entrusting the Authority responsible for planning and land use to ascertain the proposals for development that are aligned with the adaptation and mitigation agenda.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the coastal zone, both in the *Pas Géométriques* and beyond the *Pas Géométriques* in my Constituency, comprises of many environmentally sensitive areas in the form of wet land, either proclaimed or non-proclaimed. These areas are recurrently flooded and remain flooded for a prolonged duration and constitute serious challenges for land drainage solution.

Drainage solutions would certainly cost hundreds of millions of rupees at Pavillon, Cap Malheureux, Mont Oreb, Collendavelloo Lane, Eden Lane, Pereybere and Grand' Baie, and those solutions have many other implications that would not allow quick implementation. We have certainly reached a point where serious consideration is critical when considering any application for Building and Land Use Permit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius being a land scarce small island, we may not afford to keep on creating landfill stations. I welcome the amendments that would promote waste minimisation through an integrated strategy as well as waste recycling initiatives. Here, I would like to express my appreciation for the major sewerage project being implemented from Grand' Baie to Cap Malheureux and the coastal zone management projects in the region of Grand' Baie.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world economic development model in place, favouring money over nature, was already driving the world towards an apocalyptic future. Change is required in our practice, in our habit, and in our culture. This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provides all of us, on both sides of this House, with the opportunity to make history, to contribute as patriots and global citizens to help save whatever can be saved, and contribute to mitigate the effect of climate change on population.

I, therefore, congratulate the hon. Minister, Kavi Ramano, again for presenting this very important Bill to this House.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Minister Maudhoo!

(11.57 p.m.)

The Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr S. Maudhoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as global momentum builds, this Government is taking ambitious action so that Mauritius adapts to the impacts of climate change. The introduction of this Bill is in line with the commitment Mauritius made regarding our adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing our vulnerability to climate change, thus executing our obligation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

Listening to hon. Dr. Gungapersad - I think he is not here - he was vouching for the *MID (Maurice Ile Durable)*. Let me remind the House that since July 2008 till 2012, about above Rs600 m. have been spent under the *MID* Fund, and this is what hon. Bérenger had to say on this particular issue. He quoted Professor de Rosnay, saying that *il a été très critique* about what had taken place during those years. *Le MID est trop timide. Les choses ne vont pas aussi vite que je l'aurais espéré. C'est vrai, quelque part on ne donne pas les moyens de nos ambitions. Le vrai problème, c'est l'absence d'un plan d'action. Des choses se forment, mais elles manquent une vision d'ensemble et des projets mobilisateurs. Nous avons commis des erreurs comme le fait de débloquer beaucoup d'argent sans avoir de lignes directrices.* This is what it was, just to remind hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Climate change, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the crisis of our time. Our Government is not one of empty promises like others and not one of inaction. We will work to implement all the provisions of this Bill and we will place Mauritius as leader in the region for climate change actions. We are today in an era, when stresses arising from human induced climate change are affecting the productivity and sustainability of major ecosystems of our biosphere. Despite producing less than 1% of the greenhouse gas emission that cause climate change, small island developed mixed States, including Mauritius, are in the forefront of climate variability and chain impacts. According to World Risk Report 2020, Mauritius is ranked on the 53rd country with the highest disaster risk, but is still highly exposed to natural hazard.

Climate change is not only an environmental issue; it is also an economic, social and developmental issue that impacts on every aspect of lives and livelihoods. It has cross-cutting effects that impact on sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, health, tourism and infrastructure. Climate change is having a very deep impact on our oceans and marine life. Indeed, the oceans play a major role in climate dynamics by absorbing 93% of heat that

accumulates in the earth atmosphere and a quarter of the carbon dioxide released from fossil fuels. As the biggest carbon sink, the ocean plays an important role in the regulation of carbon dioxide. However, this feature is also changing the chemical composition of sea water by increasing its acidification which has a direct impact on calciferous marine organism.

Since 2018, the Mauritius Oceanography Institute of my Ministry is partnering with the Ocean Foundation as part of a global initiative to monitor the pH in Mauritius. In this endeavour, the MOI has set up a permanent offshore station in Albion to help understand the amount of dissolved carbon dioxide in the ocean and the changes of marine carbonate chemistry of the time. The observatory generates accurate data on patterns and trends in ocean acidity related to changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide. In order to consolidate the surveying capacity of the observatory, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association is funding the project for the next three years and a second observatory on the east coast of Mauritius is being set up.

In the wake of climate change, sea level rise is projected to increase and will directly impact on coastal communities. In Mauritius, sea level rise over the last decade has been recorded at 5.6mm per year, standing at 69% higher than the global average of 3.3mm per year. About 6% of the Mauritian population live on the coast, which means that the lives of about 75,000 Mauritians would be adversely affected by rising sea levels. Sea level rise will also affect the fishing banks from where we obtain the majority of our fish, namely the Nazareth bank, the Saya de Malha bank, the Sudan bank and Albatross banks. These fishing banks run the risk of disappearing with rising sea level. A proper understanding of the evolution of the sea level rise on a local scale is, therefore, vital to reduce its potential negative impacts on our already vulnerable coastline. In that respect, the MOI has engaged in a project to monitor and predict the rate of sea level rise in the Republic of Mauritius. The main objectives of the project are to –

1. determine the rate of sea level rise using remote sensing techniques;
2. set up a network of tide station in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agaléga, and
3. monitor and forecast the rate of sea level rise on a local base on in Secu-Data so as to advise the Government on the evolution of sea level rise for the Republic of Mauritius.

Coral bleaching is another phenomenon caused by climate change. It occurs when the sea surface temperature rises above the seasonal average of 29 degrees Celsius for prolonged

periods of time resulting in the death of the algae living in the corals. These algae usually live in a symbiotic relationship with corals where they provide food and shelter to each other respectively. Without these symbioses, the corals themselves face death if average sea temperatures do not decrease rapidly. The first global coral bleaching event occurred in 1997/1998 during a strong El Niño that was followed by an equally strong La Niña phenomenon. Prior to this mass bleaching event, coral bleaching was considered to be a localised event attributed to local stresses.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, we have a coastline, which is 322 km long, surrounded by 150 km of protective coral reefs, covering a lagoon of 243 km². A progressive decline in coral cover has been observed after the 1998 coral bleaching event. Since then, with the increasing intensity and frequency of El Niño events, coupled with sedimentation, due to frequent flash floods and inundations, the degradation of the coral reefs has been exacerbated. Live coral cover, which used to be an average of 50% at the selected representative monitoring sites for coral ecosystem around Mauritius in 1998, has gradually decreased after successive coral bleaching events in 1998, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2016 and 2017, causing an overall decline in the reef ecosystem to an average 20% of live coral cover in 2017.

Recent studies have predicted that at the current rate of reef degradation, there will be loss of habitats and associated organism, as well as massive Changes, in the community structure. Of all the sites surveyed in 2018, Belle Mare, Flic en Flac, Ile aux Benitiers, La Prairie, Le Morne, St Félix, Trou aux Biches, Mahebourg and Bel Ombre were the most affected with more than 80% of their live corals have been partially bleached.

In response to the continuous degradation, the Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry have collaborated on a coral culture and reef rehabilitation programme where techniques for coral culture and small scale reef rehabilitation have been developed. The aim of the project is to increase climate resilience at both regional and local levels, through coral reef restoration using thermal tolerant corals as adaptation to climate change, thereby, directly addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 14.2 and 14.5.

The objectives of the project are to improve coral reef fisheries production for food security through restoring fragile ecosystem and assisting fishing communities to better manage their coral reef resources. The loss of corals directly results in the depletion of fish

stocks, beach erosion and damage to the coastline and coastal infrastructures. The National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework noted that half of the beaches on Mauritius could disappear by 2050 with disastrous impacts on coastal ecosystem and the economy.

Vegetated coastal ecosystem such as mangroves are well-known for being efficient carbon sinks and my Ministry has a long-standing programme on mangrove propagation. Since the start of the Mangrove Restoration Programme in 1995 to date, more than 400,000 seedlings have been planted around the island, covering an area of more than 200,000 m². In fact, mangroves have been classified as protected species in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act and my Ministry is actively involved in the sensitisation of coastal communities on the importance and benefits of mangroves.

Seagrass meadows are also well-known to absorb carbon dioxide globally. In that regard, the efficiency of the sporadically present seagrass beds in our waters to act as carbon sinks, thereby mitigating local climate change in Mauritius, is being investigated under the project: Assessment of Blue Carbon Ecosystem Seagrass around the Island of Mauritius, relevance for marine special planning.

The project is being implemented by the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry with financial assistance from the United Nation Environment Programme under the WIO-SAP schemes implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities. The status of seagrasses around the coast of Mauritius is being investigated to determine the carbon sinks potential to develop management strategies and formulate policies for the conservation and rehabilitations of seagrass ecosystems. The outcome of the study will be used for the Marine Spatial Planning strategy in Mauritius.

Mainstreaming biodiversity into the management of coastal zone in the Republic of Mauritius is another project being implemented by my Ministry under the financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme and the Green Environmental Fund. The aim of the project is to mitigate the impacts of climate change through the provision of updated environmentally sensitive area maps. The improvement of the management effectiveness of the marine protected area network and the provision for erosion control and ecosystem services restoration by reducing erosion and soil loss in Erosion-Prone Watersheds and restoration of ecosystem service in coastal wetlands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is acutely aware that there cannot be a sustainable future for the blue economy without concrete action on climate change. Our marine resources will undoubtedly be affected unless prompt action is taken. The future of the fisheries and shipping sectors, which have always paid a significant part in our nation's economy, depend on a comprehensive action plan on climate change.

The introduction of this Bill is in line with the commitments which Mauritius had made regarding our capacity to adapt to climate change, to strengthen our resilience and to reduce our vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

This Bill will cater for the coordination and cooperation between Government Departments, Local Authorities and other organisations engaged in climate change projects and programmes.

I look forward to engaging with my fellow colleagues in the Inter-Ministerial Council on climate change and working together towards the development of policies which will directly address and seek to redress the effect of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is fully committed towards climate change mitigation through existing new projects, including mangroves propagation, seagrass monitoring and rehabilitation, and coral reef restoration and rehabilitation projects.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude, I would like to make reference to a story by Sreejith Krishnan from WisdomShots. Maybe, some hon. Members have come across this story. It says –

“A young and successful executive was travelling down a neighbouring street, going a bit too fast in his new Mercedes-Benz car. Suddenly, a brick smashed in his car's side door. He slammed on the brakes and drove the car back to the spot where the brick had been thrown. The angry driver then jumped out of the car and he saw a kid in that spot. He grabbed him and pushed him up against the wall and asked: “what was that all about? Who are you?”

What are you doing here? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost me a lot of money. Why did you do it?”

The young boy was apologetic.

“Please sir, I am really sorry. I don't know what else to do”, he pleaded. “I threw the brick because no one else would stop.”

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the boy pointed to a spot just around a parked car and said:

“You know, it’s my brother there. He rolled off the curb and fell out. He’s hurt and he is too heavy for me.”

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to control his emotion. He rushed and lifted the fellow boy back into the wheelchair, took out his fancy handkerchief and dressed him up.

“Thank you. May God bless you”, the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the little boy pushing the wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a slow walk back to his new car. The damage was very noticeable, but he never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent to remind him of this message -

“Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!”

And he said -

“I want to connect this story to what is going on around us right us right now.”

The young man represents all of us, meaning, we, human being. The Mercedes-Benz is our fast pace life and lifestyle. The boy in the wheelchair is our environment and planet earth which is bleeding due to various exploitations. The brick is the deadly Coronavirus thrown to us by nature to get our attention. Sometimes, you don’t have time to listen. Life throws a brick at us to slow down the mad rush we are in. Take care of the planet; take care of all the species and a reminder to live in harmony, a wake-up call for all of us to rethink our priorities.

I, therefore, congratulate my colleague, hon. Minister Ramano for presenting this very important Bill to the House.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Mrs Diolle!

Mrs Diolle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Dr. Mrs Chukowry seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bholah seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Specific matter to be raised by hon. Nagalingum!

(00.15 a.m.)

MATTER RAISED

CONSTITUENCY NO. 19 – EXCAVATION WORKS - DAMAGED ROADS

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission, allow me to raise anew, in this House, a very serious problem affecting residents of Constituency No.19, Stanley/Rose Hill. This refers to the bad state of roads after the post piping works commissioned by the Central Water Authority.

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel it is my duty to make a polite request once more to the hon. Minister of Public Utilities on this serious issue which has been lasting for almost two years. Yes, two long years of misery, of pain and which called for a lot of patience from the residents. Every day, my friend, hon. Paul Bérenger and myself, we receive numerous complaints from inhabitants, entrepreneurs, teachers and many other people on this issue. I am, this evening, taking the time of the House to once more stress on the fact that temporary patching work have proved to be useless, because 24 hours after much money has been spent to patch those damaged roads, the tar and macadam are washed away due to the intense traffic and by climatic conditions they returned back to the same conditions prior to the patch works.

Every day that God creates, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, complaints are voiced out on private radios through social media on the state of the roads. People are complaining about numerous accidents caused by these conditions and their insurance companies refuse to pay for the repairs because they are not victims of normal accidents. So, this situation is not only causing physical and moral stress but now, it is costing money for them and we are all aware in what precarious economic situation Mauritians in general are living in this COVID-19 period.

May I, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, remind that this situation is the result of pipe laying works commissioned by the Central Water Authority whereby the contractor has not honoured the contract and has mysteriously disappeared shortly after the end of pipe laying? When I inquired from the Minister of Public Utilities here in this National Assembly, he replied, I quote –

“The contractor will carry out the reinstatement of trenches only. The final full width resurfacing of the road will thereafter be entrusted to the NDU or RDA contractors depending on the classification of roads.”

And he added, I quote again –

“Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill will carry out patching works based on complaints received by the Local Authorities.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, patching works have been done until now only on trenches where the CWA contractors work for pipe laying and this patching work, as I already mentioned, is worn out in a very short period of time. Let me at this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, mention some of the roads concerned out of a list of some 40 lists which I am tabling. I named these roads –

1. Ambrose Street;
2. Inkerman Street;
3. Malartic Street
4. Cécicourt Antelme Street;
5. Duncan Street;
6. Notre Dame de Lourdes Street;
7. Labourdonnais Street;
8. Laplace Street;
9. Gladstone Street;

10. Léoville L'homme Street;
11. Dr. Barbot Street;
12. Edward VII Street;
13. Dr. Raoul Felix Street;
14. Joseph Rivière Street, and so on.

At this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me formerly request the Minister to inform the House on the terms and conditions of the contract signed between the CWA and Best Contracting for this piping work and indicate –

- When was the contract signed?
- What was the complete scope of work?
- Did it include connection works to individual residents, business units?
- When was work scheduled to be completed?
- Did the contractor comply with all the clauses and if not, what sanction has been taken?

It is public fund which the CWA has spent and it must be accounted for. This is not only a physical burden for inhabitants of Stanley and Rose Hill and a tremendous stress, the state of these roads are prone to cause accidents. So much so, if we add to the bad state of roads, the normal road markings which have disappeared resulting in many more dark spots in the town and at the same time, we are told that the Government is supposed to be doing its best to prevent road accidents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the inhabitants have not yet overcome the trauma resulting from the extinction of Promenade Roland Armand, the light rail post of Rose Hill market problem, of the catastrophic management by the Local Authorities of the business of the town, we are called upon once more to suffer from the incompetence of a contractor coupled with slow procedures to undergo necessary repairs to those damaged roads. And in the case the Minister suggests that complete resurfacing of those damaged roads are to be undertaken only after connection works are completed, let the Minister see to it then and diligently that these connection works are completed in the shortest delay as we are nearly end-of-year activities and in the meantime, a provisional reinstatement has to be carried to improve the safety of pedestrians and drivers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should a petition from the inhabitants be addressed to the Minister with copy to the Prime Minister and all Members of the House to put an end to this

lethargy management, I sincerely do not wish to have to reach this point. We are aware that the hon. Minister Lesjongard has inherited this scandal from his predecessor who, should I remind the House, was and is still one of the elected Members of this Constituency.

It is also true that the present Minister of Energy and Public Utilities seems to be more responsive. We are sure and hope that the Minister will look urgently once more into this matter and see what can be done and if need be what exceptional measure need to be taken to properly repair these roads according to safety standards and at least relieve from their miseries the inhabitants of Constituency No. 19 Stanley and Rose Hill and all those who use these roads every day to go to the place of work and back.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Minister Joe Lesjongard!

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr G. Lesjongard): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With your permission, I would like to make a statement on the specific matter raised by hon. Nagalingum on adjournment at our today's sitting regarding excavation works by the CWA in Constituency No. 19 Stanley and Rose Hill.

I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the water reticulation network in Rose Hill has been developed since years and has undergone limited replacement and upgrading. The Central Water Authority currently has a Replacement of Pipe Project consisting of the laying of approximately 27 km of ductile iron pipelines within Rose Hill areas delimited by Boundary B75 Road, Hugnin Road, Port Louis - St Jean A1, Père Laval and Vandermeersch Streets. The aim of the project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to reduce non-revenue water and water losses in the network and improve the level of service in terms of pressure and hours of supply. The works have been undertaken under two contracts namely –

1. Replacement of pipelines in Rose Hill under Zone 1 which is bounded by Hugnin Street, Boundary Road up to St Patrick Church, Duncan Taylor Street, Inkerman Street, Dr. Maurice Curé Street, Prince of Wales Street and Labourdonnais Street together with all laterals, and
2. Replacement of pipelines in Rose Hill, that is, under Zone 2 which covers Père Laval Street, Reverend Lebrun Street, Hugnin Street, Vandermeersch and Inkerman Streets along with all the laterals.

The contractual works comprise mainly excavation, pipe laying, testing, house connections and permanent road reinstatement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the excavation works under both contracts have been completed. Testing has been done up to 85% while 1344 out of 3032 households have been connected.

Now, the main reason for the delays has been the unsatisfactory performance of the contractor for which the Central Water Authority has taken corrective measures as per the contractual terms.

Moreover, it has to be added that the contractor had to change his work sequence to accommodate traffic diversion schemes in connection with Metro Express works, and the Police Department, Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit have also imposed reduced working hours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following major excavations and laying of main pipelines, a temporary reinstatement of trenches using asphaltic concrete was carried out. However, as stated by the hon. Member, due to delays in completing the works, the state of the existing temporary reinstatement on trenches has deteriorated with time under vehicular flow leading to formation of potholes and settlements. Furthermore, the contractor has failed to maintain the temporary reinstatement and to take timely remedial actions using asphaltic concrete despite instructions and notices issued to him. Only top-up with crusher run has been carried out on the potholes as a temporary measure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following complaints received regarding the state of the road and bearing in mind safety of road users, the CWA has appointed another contractor for repair of potholes and settlements over a total extent of 2,000 metre square at a cost of Rs4,336 m. exclusive of VAT.

The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin & Rose Hill, on its side, has additionally carried out localized patching works amounting to Rs2 m. approximately on Célécourt Antelme Street, Ambrose Street, Captain Bruce Street, Gordon Street and Joseph Rivière Street to alleviate inconveniences to road users. The Central Water Authority is now monitoring on a daily basis the progress of works on site based on a revised programme of work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the House that mitigating measures are being taken to ensure an adequate condition of the road for users pending, like I said in an earlier reply, the completion of the project and, from there, the permanent reinstatement of the roads will be carried out.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Nagalingum: Thank you very much.

At 00.31 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE - FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS - REPORTED CASES

(No. B/764) 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 fatal road accidents involving Heavy Goods Vehicles exceeding 3.5 tons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since 2015 to date, indicating –

- (a) if the inquiry has revealed that human error or mechanical failure were the cause thereof, and
- (b) the measures taken to improve the security of road users in view of the increasing number of these vehicles on our roads.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that since 2015 to Thursday 05 November 2020, seventy-three fatal road accidents, involving heavy goods vehicles exceeding 3.5 tons, were reported to Police whereby seventy-nine persons have unfortunately lost their lives. This represents 9.43 per cent of the total number of fatal road accidents.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that thirty-eight of these fatal road accidents occurred due to human error and one due to mechanical defects in the vehicle. The exact causes of the remaining thirty-four fatal road accidents need to be determined after completion of the enquiries in these cases.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has also informed that various measures have been taken by Police to improve the security of road users, as follows –

- (i) sensitisation through the media, which comprises daily ‘*Info-route*’ radio programme aimed to sensitise drivers on road safety measures. The

programme provides a situation report on traffic flow and focuses on road safety measures.

The Police are also sensitising drivers on road safety issues through Facebook and the issue of Police bulletins;

- (ii) on a regular basis, the Road Safety Unit and Crime Prevention Unit organise exhibitions in shopping malls, Traffic centres and schools to raise awareness among road users on the dangers of drink-driving, speeding and use of mobile phone whilst driving, amongst others;
- (iii) upon the requests of private companies, Police organise workshops for the benefit of drivers, including drivers of heavy motor vehicles, with a view to upgrading their driving skills;
- (iv) drivers who are disqualified from driving after Court convictions are referred to the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development to undergo a rehabilitation programme, in order to prevent reoffending and promoting law abiding behaviour;
- (v) Police have adopted a scientific approach for reducing road fatalities. Data are collected, analysed and resources are deployed in accident prone areas. For instance, some ninety-five Police Officers are posted daily during peak hours along the motorway to monitor the traffic and effect patrol;
- (vi) the visibility of Police in hotspots and accident prone areas has been increased and this is having a dissuasive effect on indisciplined drivers and pedestrians. During festivities, the deployment of Police Officers are also increased with a view to ensuring the safety and security of road users, and
- (vii) more targeted crackdown operations are being carried out during weekends. Such operations include breath tests and speed checks.

It must be pointed out that the Road Traffic Act 1962 has been amended in 2019 to make provision for ‘Driving under influence of intoxicating drugs’. By end of December 2020, depending on the availability of the testing kits, this provision will be enforced.

Besides the measures taken by Police, many initiatives are also being taken at the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail to prevent road accidents.

The Government is very sensitive to the issue of road accidents in our country. Since Government’s first mandate, no stone has been left unturned, and many initiatives have been implemented and aim at decreasing the number of fatal road accidents on our roads which cause hardships to families of victims. The Government will continue to strive to find best practices to address this scourge.

While the Government is making every effort to decrease the number of road accidents, all drivers are reminded of their responsibility to drive motor vehicles carefully and to avoid reckless driving, speeding, stunts and flouting of traffic rules which put at risk other people’s lives. Vehicle owners are also reminded that it is their prime duty to ensure that their vehicles are road worthy and are regularly serviced and maintained, in accordance with law. All road users, including pedestrians, are urged to remain vigilant on the roads and to respect and abide by traffic rules for their own safety.

MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY - TUGS - AGE & CONDITION

(No. B/765) Mr C. 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 tugs owned and operated by the Mauritius Ports Authority, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the age and condition thereof in each case, and
- (b) table copy of the Technical Audit thereof prepared by Messrs Keel Marine Ltd.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, the Director General has informed that the Mauritius Ports Authority owns and operates two large tugs aged 4 years and 11 years which are in good running condition, one large tug aged 19 years which is undergoing repairs since October 2020 and is expected to be operational by end of December 2020, two small tugs aged 21 years which are operational, one small tug aged 21 years which is under repairs and is expected to be in operation by early December 2020 and one small tug aged 11 years

which is not being used due to the high cost of maintenance required. The Consultants have recommended to keep three small tugs operational until they are replaced. Needful is being done by the Mauritius Ports Authority to have a new fleet of small tugs.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Report, according to further information, covers, *inter alia*, the following –

- (i) a Technical Audit of its fleet of tugs;
- (ii) assessment of the Marine Engineering Unit in terms of adequacy of manpower and capability;
- (iii) recommendations for an appropriate Marine Engineering structure, manning level, training and maintenance policy;
- (iv) a replacement plan of existing fleet of tugs, and
- (v) specifications for the procurement of the new tugs and assist during the bidding process.

Since the Consultant's Report does not only cover the Technical Audit of the tugs and that a Court of Investigation is currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the casualty of tug Sir Gaëtan, it will not be in order to table the whole Report but only the relevant section of the Report pertaining to the audit of the current MPA fleet of tugs, and this is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

On further information received, the assessment contained in the Technical Audit does not reflect the current operational status of the tugs as the MPA has already started implementing remedial works thereon.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON DRUG TRAFFICKING REPORT 2018 – RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/766) 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 the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking in Mauritius set up in July 2015, he will state the number of recommendations thereof implemented as at to date.

Reply: The hon. Member is referred to the reply made to Parliamentary Question B/7 on Tuesday 05 May 2020, wherein the different measures taken for the implementation of the recommendations made in the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking Report 2018 were clearly mentioned.

The National Drug Secretariat under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office has, since its setting up, been coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made in the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking Report on a quarterly basis. The last exercise was carried out in August 2020 and the next one is, therefore, due this month.

The 27 different Ministries/Departments and Institutions identified were provided with the list of recommendations which fall under their respective purview and were instructed to report on the status of the implementation.

Out of 390 recommendations, excluding those which fall under the responsibility of the Task Force chaired by the Director General of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, 327 are for Mauritius and 63 are for Rodrigues. As at August 2020, a total of 193 recommendations have been implemented inclusive of those for which adequate measures are already in place.

Regarding Mauritius, the status on the implementation of the recommendations as at August 2020, is as follows –

- measures implemented and adequate measures already in place represent 50% of the recommendations;
- actions have been initiated for around 20% of the recommendations;
- legislative amendments are required for 17% of the recommendations;
- 7% are not considered as feasible, and
- regarding the remaining 6%, the comments of the different organisations are awaited.

With regard to Rodrigues -

- measures implemented and adequate measures already in place represent 57% of the recommendations;
- actions have been initiated for around 21% of the recommendations;
- legislative amendments are required for 13% of the recommendations;
- 5% are not considered as feasible, and
- for the remaining 4%, the comments are awaited.

The Task Force has been specifically set up to coordinate the implementation of other recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry where names of Lawyers, Officers of the Police and the Prison Departments as well as other individuals have been mentioned.

Some of the recommendations have huge financial implications, and will require –

- (i) major policy decisions;
- (ii) concurrence of the different Service Commissions;
- (iii) review of the existing organisation structures by the Pay Research Bureau, and
- (iv) decisions by Agencies operating independently.

In spite of all these implications, the Government is working towards the implementation of the recommendations.

ELECTORAL REFORMS - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - GENDER REPRESENTATION

(No. B/767) 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 legislation thereof in the House.

(Withdrawn)

**MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - WORK PERMIT APPLICATIONS -
ALLEGED FRAUDULENT PRACTICES**

(No. B/768) Mr F. Quirin (Third 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 alleged case of forgery involving the use of fraudulent documents by the Cercle de Joachim Football Club for the recruitment of five Malagasy football players, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in regard to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that he received a correspondence from Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training regarding alleged fraudulent practices at the Mauritius Football Association with respect to Work Permit Applications for four out of five Malagasy players, who have been transferred from clubs in Madagascar to ‘Cercle de Joachim Sports Club’.

Further information received is that the matter has been referred to the Central Criminal Investigation Department for inquiry, and the inquiry is ongoing.

VESSELS – MAURITIUS TERRITORIAL WATERS – INNOCENT PASSAGE

(No. B/770) 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 foreign ships exercising the right of innocent passage by using the designated sea lanes in our maritime zones, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Coast Guard, information as to the number thereof on a yearly basis, indicating if any of them has been suspected of carrying hazardous waste, nuclear materials or radioactive materials and, if so, the actions taken in relation thereto.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that there are no designated sea lanes in the Mauritian Maritime Zones. However, the general route taken by most vessels passes close to the mainland of Mauritius. All vessels transiting through the territorial waters of Mauritius are detected by the Coastal Surveillance Radar System and a record of such passage is kept by the National Coast Guard. The system was commissioned in April 2011. As such, records of all vessels transiting through our territorial waters are available since that period.

The Commissioner of Police has also informed that since 2011 to Wednesday 04 November 2020, a total number of 834 vessels have enjoyed the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea of Mauritius. The number of vessels on a yearly basis is as follows

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Year	Number
2011	26
2012	34
2013	46
2014	31
2015	105
2016	123
2017	152
2018	108
2019	112
2020	97

(as at 04.11.20)

According to Article 23 of United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea, foreign nuclear-powered ships and ships carrying nuclear or other inherently dangerous or noxious substances shall, when exercising the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea, carry documents and observe special precautionary measures established for such ships by international agreements.

The Commissioner of Police has pointed out that no request has been received so far from any vessel to enter our port carrying hazardous waste, nuclear material or radioactive materials. Furthermore, no information from intelligence sources has been received about any vessel suspected of carrying such materials while transiting through our territorial waters.

PORT LOUIS HARBOR – TRANSSHIPMENT HUB

(No. B/774) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to transshipment in Port Louis harbour, he will state if shipping

companies are envisaging to move their transshipment to other ports and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor and the measures being taken to address same.

Reply (The Prime Minister): The Director General of the Mauritius Ports Authority has informed that, by virtue of its strategic location and modern infrastructure, Port Louis Harbour, which lies at the cross roads of key maritime routes linking Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and Australia, has emerged since 2002 as a regional transshipment hub. The world's three leading shipping lines operate regular scheduled services to Mauritius for transshipment to East and West Africa, Indian Ocean Islands and Australia.

With effect from August 2017, the quay length of the Mauritius Container Terminal has been increased to 800 metres and the facility can accommodate two large vessels of about 360 metres each with the deepening of the navigational channel from 14.5 to 16.5 metres. Port Louis Harbour is now one of the deepest ports in the South West Indian Ocean capable of handling container vessels with draughts of up to 15.5 metres and a capacity of 13,000 Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs). Following the extension and upgrading of the Mauritius Container Terminal, the annual throughput capacity has been increased from 550,000 to 1 million TEUs. Currently, the regional transshipment ports which are competing with Port Louis Harbour are the Port of Reunion and the Port of Durban.

In March 2020, the unforeseen outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted negatively on the Port operations. Consequently, one out of the three shipping lines serving Mauritius as transshipment hub, the Mediterranean Shipping Company Ltd (MSC), suspended one of its five weekly services to Mauritius, namely the one from Europe to Australia via Port Louis which was rerouted via Colombo due to its high vessel productivity and competitive tariffs. As a result, containers destined for Mauritius reached Port Louis harbour in some 50 to 60 days instead of 33 days.

The MSC has maintained its four weekly services to Mauritius from Asia to Africa via Port Louis and from the Indian Ocean region via Port Louis. Maersk and CMA CGM, the two other shipping lines, have also maintained all their transshipment weekly services to Port Louis and are not envisaging to relocate their transshipment to other ports. In fact, Maersk has increased its transshipment volume on the Asia to Africa via Port Louis route due to operational constraints being faced at the port of Durban.

In August 2020, MSC started transshipping containers destined for Mauritius at Port of Reunion in lieu of Colombo, resulting in a reduced lead time of 40 days. However, due to operational constraints at Reunion Island, MSC has decided to redirect containers destined

for Mauritius to Colombo anew as from 15 October 2020. The shipping line has informed the Mauritius Ports Authority that the lead time would be reduced to some 43 days since they have decided to mobilise larger vessels on the Colombo and Port Louis Route.

The Mauritius Container Terminal resumed normal operation as from Monday 13 April 2020 and its handling capacity has reverted to the pre-lockdown level.

According to records, an average transshipment traffic of 30,000 TEUs per month was registered before COVID-19 period. During the lockdown period, transshipment traffic had fallen to an average of 19,500 TEUs per month and after the lockdown it gradually increased to reach an average of 41,000 TEUs per month.

With a view to encouraging shipping lines to maintain and increase their transshipment activities at Port Louis, both Mauritius Ports Authority and Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd have granted additional incentives to shipping lines such as free storage area, storage charges and tariff rebates based on container volumes.

The Mauritius Ports Authority and Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd are holding regular meetings with shipping lines and other port stakeholders to address bottlenecks for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

LANDLORD & TENANT ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/795) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Landlord and Tenant Act, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought thereto with a view to extending the applicability thereof to businesses leased prior to July 2005.

Reply: Government has agreed to extend the period up to which the Landlord and Tenant Act shall continue to apply in respect of business premises let on or before 01 July 2005 to 31 December 2021.

To this effect, drafting instructions have been given to the Attorney General's Office to proceed with the preparation of a Bill to amend the existing legislation.

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILLAGE - SOUTH EAST REGION - IMPACT

(No. B/796) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to

the impact of the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spillage in the south east region, he will state the measures envisaged to boost the economic activities thereat.

Reply: Suite à la marée noire provoquée par l'échouage du MV Wakashio, de nombreux opérateurs économiques de la région ont été impactés.

Il s'agit principalement des pêcheurs, des poissonniers et des opérateurs du secteur du tourisme.

Afin de les soutenir, le gouvernement a immédiatement mis en place un ensemble de mesures et incitations financières que je vais détailler.

Un soutien financier a dans les plus brefs délais été accordé pour atténuer les difficultés financières rencontrées par les parties touchées, afin de soutenir leurs besoins et leur consommation.

A ce titre, à partir d'août 2020, une allocation de solidarité mensuelle de 10,200 roupies est versée à quelque 850 pêcheurs, 213 poissonniers et 705 détenteurs de licences/opérateurs/travailleurs de bateaux de plaisance (dont 21 *Beach Hawkers*).

Cette subvention mensuelle vise à compenser l'arrêt des activités maritimes dans les régions touchées. Un montant de 53 millions de roupies a déjà été déboursé pour la période allant d'août 2020 à octobre 2020.

En sus, le *Wage Assistance Scheme* et le *Self-Employed Assistance Scheme* ont continué à être versés aux opérateurs touristiques.

Le *Wage Assistance Scheme*, qui a été prolongé jusqu'en décembre 2020, joue un rôle fondamental pour soutenir la demande.

Par ailleurs, les opérateurs économiques de la région bénéficient également des facilités de prêt mises en place par la Banque de développement de Maurice, la *DBM*.

Le gouvernement a également mis en place une cellule d'assistance et de soutien, la *Wakashio Assistance and Support Cell* sous l'égide de la *National Social Inclusion Foundation* afin:

- d'accélérer la prise en charge des ménages et opérateurs en détresse dans les régions touchées par le naufrage du MV Wakashio,
- et de fournir une assistance, le cas échéant, par l'intermédiaire des ONG.

La cellule a déjà eu de profuses discussions avec les ONG, les pêcheurs, les plaisanciers, les colporteurs de plage, les opérateurs de taxi, les propriétaires de magasins artisanaux, les restaurants, les boutiques et les opérateurs de location dans les régions touchées.

Sur la base de ces discussions, des mesures de soutien sont en cours de finalisation en consultation avec les ministères et départements concernés.

Comme annoncé par le Premier ministre, le gouvernement a récemment levé les restrictions dans les zones touchées de Trou D'eau Douce à Petit Sable, à partir du 7 novembre 2020, sauf pour les activités de pêche. Ainsi, quelque 400 opérateurs du secteur du tourisme pourront reprendre leurs activités.

Faisant partie de notre stratégie d'accélération du plan de relance, le gouvernement vient d'annoncer un corpus de mesures d'un montant de 9 milliards de roupies. L'objectif est de stimuler au niveau national la croissance du PIB, de protéger les emplois et d'en créer de nouveaux, de réduire notre dépendance à l'égard des importations et d'améliorer le quotidien de la population.

Une partie de ce budget de 9 milliards de roupies est destinée à stimuler les activités économiques dans la région du sud-est de l'île.

Les ministères concernés, notamment ceux du tourisme et de la pêche, travaillent actuellement sur une série de mesures spécifiques au profit de la région.

CENTRAL WATER AUTHORITY - DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

(No. B/797) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water distribution network, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the projects that have been implemented since 2015 to date, indicating the amount of public funds invested therein as at to date.

Reply: I am informed by the CWA that since 2015, the main projects undertaken by the CWA related, among others, to -

- (a) the construction/replacement/renewal of pipelines;
- (b) construction of reservoirs and water treatment plants;
- (c) upgrading of pumping stations, and
- (d) works for abstraction and treatment of water.

With regard to the water distribution network, since 2015 to 2020, I am informed that the CWA has effected pipe laying works involving 432.34 kms of pipes at a total cost amounting to Rs2.5 Billion.

The CWA has presently 17 ongoing projects for construction, renewal and replacement of pipelines for a total amount of Rs1.6 Billion.

MAURITIUS – FATF – GREY LIST

(No. B/798) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the inclusion of Mauritius on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force as a jurisdiction under increased monitoring and on the blacklist of the European Commission as a high-risk country with strategic deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks, he will state –

- (a) if any study has been carried out to evaluate the impact thereof on the economy in general and global business sector in particular, and
- (b) when he expects Mauritius to be removed therefrom.

Reply: In February 2020, Mauritius was placed on the FATF List of "Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring" and Government gave a high-level political commitment to implement the FATF Action Plan within agreed timelines, in accordance with the FATF International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) procedures. Following the inclusion of Mauritius on the European Union list of "*High Risk Third Countries*", Government reviewed its strategy and doubled its efforts in order to address the FATF Action Plan items, ahead of the initially agreed FATF timelines.

With regard to part (a) of the question, no formal study has been conducted to assess the impact of the FATF listing and EU listing on the Mauritian economy and on the Global Business Sector.

It is to be recalled that the EU list of *High Risk Third Countries* became effective only recently, that is, on 01 October 2020. As such, it is too early to assess its impacts on Mauritius and the Global Business Sector, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has also had its effects on the local economy.

However, the situation is being closely monitored by the authorities, namely the Financial Services Commission and the Bank of Mauritius.

In this context, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that following an analysis of its statistics on the Global Business Sector, the Commission has not noted any abnormal exit of EU-funded GBCs from the Mauritius jurisdiction. Moreover, I am also

informed by the Bank of Mauritius that local banks have so far not registered major outflows of deposits from the Global Business Companies. The Bank of Mauritius is continuing to conduct regular surveys to assess the impact of the listings on the correspondent banking relationships with its licensees.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as per the Action Plan agreed upon at the FATF Plenary meetings in February 2020, Mauritius has to address the five identified strategic deficiencies by January 2022. However, in line with its strong political will to exit the FATF and the EU lists at the earliest, Government has committed to expedite the implementation of the FATF Action Plan ahead of the FATF timeline. It is worth noting that at the recent FATF Plenary meetings of October 2020, Mauritius was commended for the progress made to strengthen its AML/CFT system, particularly under difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been advised to pursue on that track for the implementation of the Action Plan to address the strategic deficiencies.

Government is putting in all efforts so as to be compliant with the FATF and EU requirements. To this end, all the implementing agencies are working relentlessly to complete, as soon as possible, the remaining actions under the FATF Action Plan. However, all technical procedures need to be followed, including submission of Progress Reports at regular intervals, review of the reports by the Africa/Middle East Joint Group, consideration of the Joint Group Report by the FATF Plenary and possible onsite inspection. It is to be highlighted that, unfortunately, there is no visibility on the timing of the onsite inspection in view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

On the other hand, we have been officially informed by the European Commission that once Mauritius comes out of the FATF list of "*Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring*", the European Union will remove the country from its list of *High Risk Third Countries*.

STC - LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS - TENDER

(No. B/799) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the tender for the supply of liquefied petroleum gas for the period 01 November 2020 to 31 October 2021, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

MANUFACTURING SECTOR - PROJECTS - CONSULTANTS - REPORT

(No. B/800) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the consultants whose services were enlisted by Government since 2014 to date for conducting studies and the preparation of reports relating to the manufacturing sector and, in particular, the textile and apparel industry, he will state the -

- (a) names thereof,
- (b) amount paid thereto, and
- (c) recommendations made, indicating the percentage thereof implemented as at to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that Consultants were hired for a number of eight projects with respect to the manufacturing sector. I am tabling the information.

DOMICILIARY MEDICAL VISIT – BENEFICIARIES & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/801) 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 Medical and Health Officers employed by her Ministry on contract/sessional basis for –

- (i) Medical Boards, and
- (ii) Domiciliary Visits, she will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the fees paid on a monthly basis, since January 2019 to date.

Reply: Parliamentary Questions B/801 and B/806 are replied together as they both relate to the same subject matter.

The list of medical practitioners employed on a sessional basis by my Ministry as well as the fees paid to them on a monthly basis since January 2019 to date is tabled.

For a beneficiary to be eligible for domiciliary visit, the person should be bedridden or severely disabled and in receipt of a Carer's Allowance. Elderly persons of 90 years and above who are neither bedridden nor severely disabled nor in receipt of a Carer's Allowance are also eligible for domiciliary visits.

There are presently around 24,512 beneficiaries benefitting from domiciliary visits on a monthly basis.

MOTORWAYS M1, M2 & M3 - ROUNDABOUTS - MAINTENANCE

(No. B/802) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the roundabouts found on the motorways M1, M2 and M3, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, a list thereof which is

–

- (a) presently embellished and maintained by private companies, indicating the –
 - (i) the name thereof;
 - (ii) roundabouts concerned, and
 - (iii) contract period, and
- (b) not embellished and maintained by private companies, indicating if his Ministry envisages to launch tenders in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that currently there are 38 roundabouts along the Motorways M1, M2 and M3, of which 3 are under reconstruction. I am further informed that the embellishment and maintenance of 34 of the roundabouts are currently sponsored by private companies and one by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change. The sponsors maintain the roundabouts at their own cost and in accordance with the guidelines set out by the RDA.

Sponsorship to private companies is granted on a first come first serve basis for a period of three years and is subject to renewal upon request and satisfactory performance.

I am tabling a copy of the list of roundabouts and their sponsors.

Accordingly, part (b) of the question does not arise. However, I wish to inform the House that Government, in the context of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Mauritius campaign, intends to green and embellish the Motorways M1 and M2, i.e. from the SSR International Airport to Grand Bay.

In this context, I am informed that the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has awarded a consultancy contract for the preparation of a Master Plan for greening and embellishment of Motorways M1 & M2 on 05 October 2020.

The Master Plan will provide an integrated approach taking into consideration specificities such as road safety, biodiversity and ecology, micro-climate, roadside drainage,

soil type, scenic views, cultural aspects and history of the region. The greening and embellishment works shall consist of the softscaping works such as plantation of non-invasive endemic plants, decorative trees, bushes, fruit trees, exotic flowering plants as well as hardscaping works such as uplifting and embellishment of existing structures along the motorway, new structures and amenities such as water features, walkways, and lighting for visual effects, preferably high quality energy efficient solar LED lighting, amongst others.

The consultancy services have started on 23 October 2020 and are expected to be completed by April/May 2021.

CASH OFFICES - CLOSING TIME - EXTENSION

(No. B/803) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to Cash Offices of Ministries/Departments, he will state if consideration will be given for the extension of the closing time thereof beyond 1430 hours and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: Actuellement, il y a quelques 23 ministères et départements qui opèrent 150 caisses. Ces caisses fonctionnent selon les besoins et ont donc des horaires d'ouvertures qui diffèrent.

Certaines caisses fonctionnent uniquement en semaine, d'autres sont ouvertes le samedi également. L'heure de fermeture diffère également et varie de 14h30 à 16h30.

Sur les 150 caisses, 103 ferment après 14h30.

Pour les caisses qui ferment à 14h30, cela a été décidé en fonction des heures d'ouverture des banques commerciales, étant donné que les banques exigent que les espèces soient déposées avant 15h00.

Il n'est pas envisagé, à ce stade, de prolonger l'heure de fermeture des caisses.

En effet, en vue d'améliorer la prestation de services liés à l'encaissement des espèces, le gouvernement a déjà mis en place un système de paiement électronique qui permet aux citoyens d'effectuer des paiements en ligne à tout moment de la journée.

Ces mesures concernent 14 services qui sont actuellement disponibles sur la plateforme électronique.

Cela présente de nombreux avantages. En effet, l'adoption des paiements numériques réduit les risques de vol, les coûts pour les pouvoirs publics et facilite les affaires.

GRADE 9 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT - SYLLABI - DELOADING

(No. B/804) 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 Grade 9 National Assessment, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to if the deloading of the syllabi thereof has been undertaken, indicating the pedagogical impact thereof on the students.

(Withdrawn)

CAP MALHEUREUX – STATE LAND LEASE

(No. B/805) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the State Land, he will state the number of plots thereof located in Cap Malheureux which have been leased since January 2015 to date, giving the list of lessees, indicating the corresponding rent payable therefor.

(Withdrawn)

DOMICILIARY MEDICAL VISIT – BENEFICIARIES & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/806) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the domiciliary medical visit, she will state the –

- (a) number of beneficiaries thereof as at to date, and
- (b) eligibility criteria therefor.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/801)

NURSING COUNCIL ACT – AMENDMENTS

(No. B/807) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Nursing Council Act, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought thereto for the –

- (a) composition of the Council to consist of two Rodriguans elected representatives of the nursing profession of Rodrigues thereon, and

- (b) election for the representatives thereof to be conducted in Rodrigues by the nursing staff of Rodrigues.

(Withdrawn)

ATHLETE ASSISTANCE SCHEME

(No. B/808) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Athlete Assistance Scheme managed by the High-Level Sports Unit, he will –

- (a) give the list of athletes –
- (i) who are actually benefitting therefrom, indicating their respective discipline, sum allocated and period, and
 - (ii) who are no longer beneficiaries thereof, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) state if there has been any discontinuation of payment thereof, from January 2020 to date and, if so, why, indicating the duration thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS GYMNASTIC FEDERATION - TEMPORARY COMMITTEE

(No. B/809) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Gymnastic Federation, he will state if a Temporary Committee has been set up therefor and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) date thereof;
- (b) composition thereof, indicating the fees payable to the members, if any;
- (c) number of meetings held as to date, and
- (d) decisions taken by the Committee.

(Withdrawn)

CONCRETE HOUSING PROJECT

(No. B/810) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to full Concrete Housing project for families registered under the Social Register of

Mauritius, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the –

- (a) number of housing units –
 - (i) constructed during the financial year 2019-2020, indicating the cost thereof, region-wise and the names of the beneficiaries, and
 - (ii) still under construction, and
- (b) list of projects, region-wise for the financial year 2020-2021, indicating the budget allocated therefor.

(Withdrawn)

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY BOARD - TRAINEE TECHNICIANS

(No. B/811) 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.

Reply: I am informed that CEB normally enlists the services of Trainee Technicians I and Trainee Technicians II to cater for temporary vacancies arising from filling of vacancies in promotional positions or to ensure succession planning at the level of Technician Cadre.

Trainee Technicians I are required to have completed Form III or Prevoc while Trainee Technicians II should have completed Form III plus should hold a technical qualification.

In reply to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the CEB that over period 2016 to 2018, 190 Trainee Technicians have been recruited from the Employment Services and they all hold the required qualifications for the position.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that 100 Trainee Technicians I do not possess technical qualifications as this position of any Trainee Technician I does not require holding of technical qualification.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the CEB has informed that arrangements have been made with the MITD to allow Trainee Technicians I, not holding the technical qualifications, to follow and sit for the NC3 course conducted by MITD in the relevant field.

To date, 55 of these Trainee Technicians have passed the NC3 course, while 45 of them are still pursuing their courses at the MITD.

**MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD & AIR MAURITIUS –
ALLOCATION OF FUNDS**

(No. B/812) 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.

Reply: Je répondrai conjointement aux questions B/812 et B/821 qui se rapportent au même sujet.

Comme je l'ai indiqué, la *Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd* est une société privée à responsabilité limitée, entièrement détenue par la Banque de Maurice.

A ce titre, le gouvernement ne peut donner à la *MIC* des directives opérationnelles.

COMBINED CYCLE GAS TURBINE PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/813) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RAILWAY ROAD - HIGHLANDS

(No. B/814) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Railway Road Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for –

- (a) road surface markings to be placed thereat, and
- (b) indication signs to be installed to regulate the speed in view of the presence of a primary school in the vicinity thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) that a site visit was conducted at the locus on Thursday 05 November 2020 where the following were noted –

- a) there is no Government School along Railway Road, Highlands;
- b) the Railway Road is about 500m long and is a two-way traffic road that links Highlands-Belle Terre Road (B68) near the ex-Highlands Sugar Estate and the Terre Rouge/Verdun/Trianon Link Road and Bagatelle/Valentina Link Road (M3), near *Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile Ltée*;
- c) the Railway Road is marked along the edge and the centre line together with stop lines at junctions. The Road is of a straight alignment, except for a slight bend some 50 metres prior to the signalised junction with the Motorway M3;
- d) the Railway Road is of average 6.0 metres width. Segregation of pedestrians from vehicular traffic by means of raised footpaths is absent, except for a distance of about 140 metres whereby footpaths are present on the right hand side when proceeding towards Motorway M3 road;
- e) the state of the Railway Road is observed as proper and the road markings are in a good condition in thermoplastic medium;
- f) street lighting is present all along the Railway Road, and
- g) there are mainly residential developments along the Railway Road together with some shops fronting the road.

The TMRSU has also informed that an enquiry from local inhabitants has been carried out and it has been revealed that the flow of traffic along Railway Road, especially during morning peaks, has increased substantially. This is due to the coming into operation of the traffic lights at the junction of Motorway M3 and Railway Road and the traffic congestion already present along Motorway M2 along the northbound carriageway. Heavy Goods vehicles are also plying along the Railway Road in increasing numbers. A 40 kmph traffic sign is present near the junction of Motorway M3 road and Railway Road.

As regards part (a) of the question, the TMRSU has recommended the painting of slow markings near the junction of Motorway M3 and Railway Road and painting of Stop and Slow markings near the junction of B 68 and Railway Road. These will be implemented by the TMRSU at the earliest in order to improve road safety of Railway Road.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the TMRSU that needful has already been done for the fixing of a 40 kmph sign along the road. In addition, Police have been requested to effect regular speed checks thereat.

ONE-MONTH PARENTAL LEAVE - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/815) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training whether, in regard to the introduction of the one-month parental leave as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S COUNCIL - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/816) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Children's Council, she will state the activities carried out by the Council for the last two years, indicating the annual budget allocated therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS FIRE RESCUE SERVICE - STAFF

(No. B/817) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard Mauritius Fire Rescue Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if it is equipped with the necessary human, technical and operational capabilities to attend to fire and emergency rescue operations at sea, including our Exclusive Economic Zone.

(Withdrawn)

WATER SUPPLY (DOMESTIC) - DISRUPTION

(No. B/818) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the regions of Rose Hill and particularly along Hugnin Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the -

- (a) reasons as to the repetitive interruptions of domestic water supply thereat, and
- (b) measures being envisaged to ensure a prompt water supply through water tankers thereat.

(Withdrawn)

PONT COLVILLE DEVERELL, MONT ORY – FATAL ROAD ACCIDENT

(No. B/819) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the fatal road accident which occurred on 21 October 2020 at Pont Colville Deverell, Mont Ory, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire Rescue Service, information as to the time taken to reach the spot.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS-AFRICA FUND - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/820) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius-Africa Fund, he will state the –

- (a) the number of applications –
 - (i) received,
 - (ii) processed, and
 - (iii) approved, and
- (b) amount of fund disbursed therefrom since its creation to date.

Reply: Ce gouvernement a, sous la direction de notre Premier ministre, dessiné une stratégie ambitieuse pour l'Afrique en tant que pivot du développement économique de Maurice.

Cette stratégie au regard du continent africain vise à avoir un impact plus important sur la facilitation des investissements du secteur privé mauricien en Afrique.

Cette stratégie s'articule autour de quatre piliers, qui sont:

- Premièrement, l'élargissement de l'espace économique de Maurice par l'internationalisation des entreprises mauriciennes, que ce soit par le commerce, l'exportation de services ou l'investissement dans d'autres pays africains;
- Deuxièmement, l'accélération de l'intégration diplomatique, économique et financière de Maurice avec l'Afrique;
- Troisièmement, la promotion du transfert de technologie, de savoir-faire et de capacités au profit des entreprises mauriciennes; et

- Quatrièmement et enfin, il s'agit aussi d'attirer, mobiliser et déployer sur le continent africain des financements de projets et des instruments financiers via Maurice.

Le modèle initial du *Mauritius-Africa Fund* était de participer au capital social des entreprises mauriciennes investissant dans des projets viables sur le continent africain à hauteur de 10 % maximum de leurs fonds propres.

Ce modèle n'est donc pas pertinent dans le contexte actuel.

À la lumière du réajustement de notre stratégie pour l'Afrique, le nouveau modèle opérationnel du *Mauritius-Africa Fund* se concentre maintenant sur la création de zones économiques durables ou *Sustainable Economic Zones*, dans les pays africains au travers d'un partenariat de gouvernement à gouvernement.

Ces zones donneront lieu à de vastes possibilités d'investissement et d'affaires pour les entreprises mauriciennes grâce à la création de divers groupes d'activités économiques, tels que le textile, les TIC, la technologie et l'innovation, l'agro-industrie et la transformation des produits agricoles, la pharmaceutique ou encore le manufacturier.

Alors que le monde lutte pour surmonter la crise de la COVID-19, ce gouvernement a, dans le budget 2020/2021, réaffirmé son engagement à remplir le rôle de facilitateur pour l'investissement, les affaires et le commerce avec les pays du continent africain et de la région de l'océan Indien au profit des entreprises mauriciennes.

Les projets prioritaires du *Mauritius-Africa Fund* sont les développements suivants, à savoir:

- i. la ville textile de Moramanga à Madagascar ;
- ii. le *Technology and Innovation Hub* au Ghana en collaboration avec l'Université du Ghana;
- iii. le Parc industriel au Sénégal ;
- iv. le Parc technologique et biotechnologique en Côte d'Ivoire ;
- v. le Centre technologique et industriel à Naivasha, au Kenya, et
- vi. un Projet agricole en Tanzanie

Dans le contexte actuel, le *Mauritius-Africa Fund* explore également de nouvelles opportunités de développement et d'investissement dans des secteurs à forte croissance et à forte composante d'innovation qui intéressent les entreprises mauriciennes, tels que les technologies de pointe, les technologies électroniques, l'industrie pharmaceutique et les énergies renouvelables.

(No. B/821) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to investment in Africa as announced at paragraph 138 of the Budget Speech 2020/2021 by the Mauritius Investment Corporation, he will state the number of projects earmarked and sum disbursed as at to date, giving details of SEZ projects, if any, under the G2G Framework.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/812)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC – FUNDS – SETTING UP

(No. B/822) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the National Environment Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the amount of funds disbursed amid the COVID-19 pandemic, if any, indicating the –

- (a) project funded thereunder, and
- (b) amount allocated to local authorities or any other government bodies.

Reply: The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has informed that no funds have been disbursed under the National Environment Fund in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has also informed that following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, two Funds have been set up at its level to finance projects and schemes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, namely -

- (i) The COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, established under the Finance and Audit (COVID-19 Solidarity Fund) Regulations 2020, and
- (ii) The COVID-19 Project Development Fund which was set up on 28 April 2020 as a Special Fund, through regulations made under the Finance and Audit Act.

LOVEBRIDGE LTD – FUNDS & BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/823) Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Love bridge project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the amount of fund received and spent as at to date, indicating the –

- (a) cost incurred therefor in terms of salary and administrative cost for the year 2017 to date, and

(b) number of beneficiaries thereof.

Reply (The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development): J'ai été informé qu'à ce jour, Lovebridge Ltd a reçu une somme totale de 122 millions de roupies et a déboursé 97 millions de roupies.

En ce qui concerne les parties (a) et (b) de la question, je dépose les informations demandées par l'honorable parlementaire.

SHELTERED FARMS – SETTING UP

(No. B/824) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the pilot project for the setting up of some 100 sheltered farms financed by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -

- (a) if same has been implemented and, if so, indicate the number thereof set up as at to date, and
- (b) the number of direct and indirect jobs created as a result thereof.

Reply: As the House may be aware, the setting up of 100 sheltered farms was announced in the 2018-2019 Budget Speech.

The 100 Farm Project aims at the setting up of sheltered farms at five different sites for the growing of high quality fresh vegetables for local consumption and supply to hotels. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development entrusted the project to the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) Ltd for implementation. The farms were to be delivered on a Ready to Operate basis.

My Ministry was to provide the relevant technical expertise for the setting up of the sheltered farms and the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) was requested to work on the list of crops to be cultivated.

I am informed that the bids for the construction of 10 sheltered net farms at Plaine Magnien and 10 greenhouses at Melrose were launched by the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) on 31 January 2019. The closing date was 05 March 2019.

An evaluation exercise was carried out as there were no responsive bidders.

Subsequently in March 2019, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development entrusted the implementation of the project to FAREI. The project was thus taken over by FAREI in March 2019.

In view thereof, 20 net sheltered farms have been built at Plaine Magnien. Bid documents were prepared for the supply, installation, and commissioning of the 20 net houses of 4,000 m² each at Plaine Magnien and vetted by the Central Procurement Board. Invitation to bid (Open National Bidding) was launched on 27 September 2019.

After evaluation by the Central Procurement Board (CPB), the contract was allocated to Golden Valley Sonalall JV for the sum of MUR 36,847,297.54, excluding VAT. The agreement was signed on 28 January 2020. The site was handed over to the Contractor on 25 February 2020 and the duration of works was 147 days.

However, due to the COVID-19 confinement, works had to be stopped and they resumed on 01 June 2020.

The works have been completed at Plaine Magnien and the structures have been handed over to FAREI on 05 November 2020. The next step is the launching of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for renting the units to potential farmers.

In January 2020, a second project for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 10 hydroponic greenhouses of 500 m² each complete with fertigation system and civil works at Melrose was initiated. Invitations to bids (Open National Bidding) were launched on 09 June 2020. The closing date was 16 July 2020.

After evaluation carried out by the CPB, the successful bidder was JV New Horizon Builders Ltd/Blychem Ltd.

However, the unsuccessful bidder Golden Valley Sonalall JV made an application for review to the Independent Review Panel. The Independent Review Panel requested that the bids be evaluated again.

I am informed that another Bid Evaluation Committee has been constituted at the level of the Central Procurement Board and the evaluation exercise is ongoing.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 20 direct and 20 indirect jobs are expected to be created for the project at Plaine Magnien and some 10 direct and 10 indirect jobs are expected in respect of sheltered greenhouses at Melrose.

I wish to inform the House that I propose to review the implementation modality of the project. Hence, instead of a Ready to Operate basis, a grant formula is currently being studied by my Ministry. I believe that this new formula will better serve the farming community.

HIGHLANDS – INCINERATOR - OPERATIONAL

(No. B/825) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the incinerator constructed and installed at Highlands in Constituency No. 15, La Caverne and Phoenix, he will state when same will be operational.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix that the building to house the incinerator equipment at Highlands is ready since July 2020. The incinerator equipment was installed in December 2019 by the local representative of the supplier, Kanta Electricals India Ltd, in the presence of Senior Mechanical Engineer appointed by this Ministry as Project Manager.

It is to be highlighted that along with Highlands, there are 15 other new sites which are being provided with incinerator equipment under the Indian Line of Credit. Highlands forms part of a first batch of eight sites where the incinerator equipment were installed, given that the equipment delivery was scheduled in two different consignments – November 2019 and January 2020.

The technical team from Kanta Electricals India Ltd was in Mauritius for a first time in January 2020 for inspection of the first batch of incinerators which had been installed and they were expected to be back in Mauritius early March 2020 for the installation of the second consignment, following which, all the 16 equipment were to be commissioned.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic halted the project and the arrival of the technical team could not be made possible given the closure of borders.

With a view not to further delaying the project, in August 2020 my Ministry made a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade with respect to travel arrangements for the technical team. However, no seat is available with return flights.

My Ministry is in constant communication with both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the supplier Kanta Electricals India Ltd in view to facilitate the arrival of the technical team depending on flight and seat availability.

Upon their arrival, the technicians would have to undergo quarantine for two weeks, following which, they would proceed with the testing and commissioning exercise of the incinerator equipment if they are tested negative for COVID-19.

The Project Manager has informed that after the commissioning, a curing exercise will have to be undertaken for a period of two weeks.

LANDSCOPE (MAURITIUS) LTD - EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME

(No. B/826) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the early retirement scheme for all the agricultural and non-agricultural workers of ex-Highlands Sugar Estate as proposed by Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: Le 10 septembre 2020, *Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd* a informé les travailleurs agricoles de l'*ex-Highlands Sugar Estate*, de la mise en place d'un plan de retraite anticipée volontaire qui sera effectif à partir du 31 décembre 2020.

En ce qui concerne ce plan, les conditions suivantes ont été proposées aux travailleurs –

- deux mois de salaire de base par année de service;
- une compensation de 500,000 roupies, et
- le remboursement des congés annuels, des congés maladie et des congés à l'étranger non utilisés pour l'année 2020.

J'ai été informé que 63 travailleurs sur 78 ont exprimé leur intention d'opter pour la retraite anticipée dans le cadre du plan proposé.