



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2024

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MAURITIUS**Seventh National Assembly****FIRST SESSION****Debate No. 15 of 2024****Sitting of Wednesday 19 June 2024**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 10.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

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

Dr. Padayachy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Mr Gobin seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I will now invite the hon. Deputy Chairperson of Committees to chair the Committee of Supply.

Diboute ta! Diboute! Respect Parliament! Respect Parliament or you walk out. Walk out from here! Walk out from here, hon. David. Walk out for the rest of the day. You are not respecting the Mace, you are not respecting Parliament.

At this stage, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

PUBLIC BILL**THE APPROPRIATION (2024-2025) BILL**

(No. IV of 2024)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2024-2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024) was resumed.

(10.35 a.m.)

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

The Chairperson: We will be proceeding by Sub-Head. We are on page 202, Sub-Head 7-101 – General. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, good morning. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Can I know from the hon. Minister, a breakdown of the extra assistance?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes. Provision made for the remuneration of 4 Advisers on contract and the Commissioner for the protection of borrowers. I can table if you want. I table? Okay, good.

The Chairperson: Moving on to page 203, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 26323.148 – *Economic Development Board*. We are being asked to vote for substantially higher figure of Rs64 m. as compared to Rs22.5 m. for capital investment for the Economic Development Board this year. May I ask the hon. Minister why is that so?

Dr. Padayachy: For the Capital Grant, you got the acquisition of IT equipment –

- Replacement of laptop and desktop computers, purchase of integrated and management printing facilities, purchase of ups around Rs4,700,000;
- Replacement of call Centre equipment and other equipment, Rs7.4 m.;
- Acquisition of software;
- Upgrading of IT infrastructure;
- Monitoring tours setup, visitor's access card solutions, customer relationship manager, Rs23 m.; and
- Refurbishment of the EDB Building, Rs18.9 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Item 22900.806 – *Expenses icw Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA)*. May we know from the hon. Minister the composition of that authority and the projects undertaken by them?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for the implementation of the agreement signed between MOFED and IPA of the United Kingdom for capacity building and training, sharing of

experience and sharing of best practices in project contract management in respect to capital project lifecycle at all levels such as; planning, preparation, appraisal, procurement, implementation, commissioning, evaluation and monitoring.

There will be conferences, seminars and workshops also that are going to be organised. You want to have the composition? That's it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28217.001 – *Insurance*. May we know what is the insurance for and why the increase in budget?

Dr. Padayachy: There is an increase concerning *others* in provision due to a high number of missions undertaken by Government officials. The provision required is for payment of insurance cover for Public Officials proceeding on overseas missions.

The Chairperson: Do we have questions on page 204? Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, Item 22120 – *Fees to Consultants*...

The Chairperson: Sorry, hon. Osman Mahomed, we are still on Sub-Section 101 – General on page 204.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay. Item 31112.401 – *Upgrading of Office Buildings*. May we know for which building this is being referred to, Rs8 m. this year and Rs5 m. last year?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for the upgrading of offices at Government House.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over. Sub-Head 7-102 – Procurement Policy Office on page 204. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, I will take it under Item 21110.001 – *Basic Salary*. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of cases referred to the Procurement Policy Office for sanctions against contractors?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of salary and yearly increment. You got 16 funded positions and 12 in post. I don't have the information with me now. I am going to table it. Okay?

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, on page 204 Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*. There is an amount of Rs5 m. which is budgeted. May we have the details and breakdown of which consultant we are referring to?

Dr. Padayachy: There is a decrease in provision as per contractual obligation. Provision is made for the hiring of a consultant for the review of the procurement legal framework.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to page 205. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can we have the details for Item 31132.081 – *Acquisition of Software (a) e-Data Management System (e-DMS)*, last year was estimate of Rs6 m. and this year it's nil everywhere. May we have the details about it for last year?

Dr. Padayachy: It is a decrease due to non-implementation of the project.

The Chairperson: Thank you no more questions on Sub-Head 7-102: Procurement Policy Office. We are now on page 205, Sub-Head 7-103: Independent Review Panel. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.001 – *Basic Salary*. May we have the composition of the Independent Review Panel, the number of cases lodged and dealt with by that panel?

Dr. Padayachy: I will table the composition. For Financial Year 2023-24, total case filed is 20 and pending cases is 2 to 3.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*. Can we have details about those fees please?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for payment fees as follows: a fee to Chairperson, fees to member of Boards and Committees. The IRP consists of one Chairperson. I will table the name of the Board members and the Chairperson has a fees of Rs77,000 monthly, Vice-

Chairperson: Rs49,000 monthly and the members Rs28,350 monthly. Provision is made for the legal fees for case lodged against the IRP before the Supreme Court.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 206, Sub-Head 7-104: Assessment Review Committee. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 206, Item 22030 – *Rent*. An amount of Rs10.585 m. has been earmarked. Can we have some details with regard to this amount?

Dr. Padayachy: Rental of 2nd and 6th floors of Hennessy Building. The lessor is MauBank. We are renting with MauBank.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. An amount of Rs11.6 m., may we have the details of this figure?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in the provision is due to the appointment of an additional member. I will table the list of the members.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you. Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. Can I know the name of the Chairperson and the pay package and also the number of cases they have dealt with?

Dr. Padayachy: The Chairperson is Mr Lauloo. The pay package is Rs150,750 monthly.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the same Item, may we know how many cases are pending from the ARC currently?

Dr. Padayachy: The number of cases pending as of 01 June 2023 is 3,482.

The Chairperson: Thank you. So we are now on last Sub-Head for Vote Item 7-1. Sub-Head 7-105: Economic Research and Planning Bureau. Page 206-207.

Vote 7-1 Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Rs5,750,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.48 a.m.)

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board was called.

The Chairperson: Page 210. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 22120.006 – *Fees to Assessors*. Can the hon. Minister circulate the list of assessors who have beneficiated from this Item?

Dr. Padayachy: I will table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. An amount of R11.2 m. was budgeted for the last financial year, and for the coming financial year, Rs9.7 m, there is a decrease. Can the hon. Minister explain this decrease?

Dr. Padayachy: The decrease is due to non-recruitment of the officer on contract.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the same Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Can we know the name of the people and the amount received by them under that heading?

Dr. Padayachy: I can table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*. Can the hon. Minister elaborate on the rent and the name of building rented?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for rental of building at NPF Building Rose-Hill and the actual expenditure as of May 2024 is Rs4.6 m. There is also the rental of parking slots.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 211. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 22120.006 – *Fees to Assessors*. May we know how many of them there are?

Dr. Padayachy: I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 210. Item 22060 – *Maintenance*. I can see that there has been an increase of almost Rs1 m.; from Rs2 m. to Rs3 m. May we know the reason of this increase and what is this maintenance all about?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made under this Item for maintenance of infrastructure, plants and equipment and vehicles. The increase is mainly due to repairs of flooring in various offices, high cost of vehicle maintenance due to depreciation and server maintenance agreement. There is also the maintenance of building increase in provision for repairs flooring and so on.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board (Rs74,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.52 a.m.)

Vote 7-3 Treasury was called.

The Chairperson: Page 213. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22900 – *Other goods and Services*. There is an amount of Rs9.3 million which is budgeted. May we have the details and breakdown of this figure?

Dr. Padayachy: Increase in provision due to bank service charges and increase in the number of POS being installed in police stations for collection of fines.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Yes, hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: In fact, I want the details and breakdown of this figure, not only the increase, of Rs9 million. If you do not have it, you can circulate it.

Dr. Padayachy: I can circulate it.

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

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 213, Item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which – IT Equipment*, can we know to whom the contract for maintenance of IT equipment has been awarded?

Dr. Padayachy: The contractor is State Informatics Ltd.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms. Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, may we know the increase in provision for this item?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is due to an expected 5% annual increase for renewal of contract and for renting of additional office space at ground floor, Rabadia Building in order to relocate all customers-oriented sections to the ground floor.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can the Minister inform the House to whom these fees are destined to?

Dr. Padayachy: These include fees for Provision the following –

- 1) Fees for training – Rs250,000
- 2) Fees to Consultant – Rs220,000.
- 3) Provision is made to cater for the payment of professional fees in respect of actuarial work to SICOM.
- 4) Provision is made for refund of subscription fees to professional bodies to ACCA.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 214, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26210.040 – *Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountant-Generals (ESSAG)*, may I know from the hon. Minister what services do we receive from this Association as we pay Rs1.2 million?

Dr. Padayachy: You got the contribution to International Organisation etc... Provision is also made for payment of Annual Membership Fee to the Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountant-Generals. As for the services, I will table it. I do not have it with me.

Vote 7-3 Treasury (Rs190,400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.56 a.m.)

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, page 216.

Mr Bhagwan: Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have the details of the Rs5.1 million we are being asked to vote for?

Dr. Padayachy: This refers to fees for Chairman and Members of Board of Committees. I will table the list of the Board Members.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 216, Item 22130 – Studies and Surveys. Here we note that there is a drastic drop in the budgetary allocation. May we know why and then, if possible to table the list of different studies and surveys and to indicate what these surveys and studies about?

Dr. Padayachy: The decrease in provision is mainly due to completion of household budget survey and census of economic activities and to cater for the ongoing surveys of housing and population census. I will table the report.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, there is a two-fold increase in the budget from Rs2.8 million to Rs4.9 million. Can we have more information on that?

Dr. Padayachy: This increase in provision is to cater for repairs and servicing of vehicles and also, it is due to maintenance of the modern statistics platform.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22030 – *Rent*, can the hon. Minister inform the House the name of the Building and the amount paid monthly?

Dr. Padayachy: This refers to the LIC ground floor, 1st, 2nd and 5th floors, Wing A; the amount is Rs11.484 million and the LIC 5th floor Wing B costs Rs1.4 million.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius (257,700,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(11.00 a.m.)

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

The Chairperson: We are on page 219. Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is a substantial amount of Rs23 million. May we have the details and breakdown of which premises are being rented and where?

Dr. Padayachy: So, renting of office space of more than 19,000 square feet. It is at One Cathedral Square, Port Louis.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thankyou Mr Chairperson. Page 219, under Item 22090 – *Security*, may we know which company or agency is providing that security to the Corporate and Business Registration Department?

Dr. Padayachy: The Contractor is Rapid Security Services.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.036 – *Expenses icw Extensible Business Reporting*. An amount of Rs18,000,000 is being earmarked. May we have more details for this item please?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for payment to Mauritius Network Services for electronic filing of financial statement in Ex-BRL format for large companies as to create a standardised format for financial reporting.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item *21110.001 – Basic Salary*, may we know from the hon. Minister whether the post of Registrar of Companies has been filled?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, it has been filled. I will table the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 220, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, in relation to Item *31132.401 –Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure – Corporate and Business Registration Integrated System 3.0*, every year there is an amount of Rs10 million which is budgeted, may we know what this project is?

Dr. Padayachy: The CBRIS was developed in 2006 to enable online corporation of companies. The platform consists of only an online form for incorporation and an online database. Over the years, the CBRIS was upgraded and modules were added to the platform to cater for the new rules of the household. However, the current system has some structural and systemic issues which need to be addressed for a more efficient process to start a business.

Vote 7-5 – Corporate and Business Registration Department (Rs158,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(11.04 a.m.)

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

The Chairperson: Page 222, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Mr Chairperson, Item *22060 – Maintenance*, there was an amount of Rs22.8 million which was budgeted for last financial year. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this amount?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is mainly due to a rise in the cost of maintenance of Plant and Equipment, mainly Air Conditioners and IT equipment, new provisions for rodent and pest

control services, previously provided under the MNICD's budget, now to be procured by the RGD.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you Mr Chairperson. We note on page 222, Item 22030 – Rent, this time I find that there has been an increase of only Rs6000 as compared to last year where it was Rs1,080,000 and now it is Rs1,086,000. May we have a detailed breakdown of this rent, to whom it is payable and why that insignificant increase?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is in the provision for parking slots only. The rental of parking slots was at Rs60,000. This year, it is going to be at Rs66,000. For the building, it is Rs180,000. The line for network services Rs840,000. That is for the rent.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour, page 223.

Ms Tour: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item *31132.401 – Intangible Fixed Assets of which – Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, may we know from the hon. Minister, what is the amount budgeted for?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in provision is due to the following projects –

- Consultancy Services to revamp the E-Registry System – Rs14 million;
- The Mauritius E-Registry System Infrastructure – Rs20 million, and
- Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure, search online, 2nd phase – Rs1 million
- The MauPass Corporate – Rs3 million
- The Movable Property Registry System, MPRS – Rs7 million,
- The Electronic Document Management System, EDMS – Rs2 million.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item *31112.401 – Upgrading of Office Building*, there has been a substantial increase to Rs9.4 million. May we know the details of this figure and why such an increase?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is due to provision being made for the setting up of 3 new offices at Search Room, Rs800,000, installation of an Automatic Fire Suppression System at Archives Unit for Rs8 million, a prerequisite for fire certificate and the refurbishment of Finance and Public Area Counter – Rs600,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: I come back to Item *31112.401 – Upgrading of Office Building*, the hon. Minister has just given a breakdown of the purpose for which the amount is budgeted. May we have from the hon. Minister the name of the contractors who have been awarded the contract for these works?

Dr. Padayachy: Not yet awarded.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 7-6 Registrar-General's Department (Rs189,500,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(11.09 a.m)

Vote 25-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 490. Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item *22180 – Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and officials)*, can I have from the hon. Minister a breakdown of expenses including air tickets, accommodation and *per diem* with regard to missions effected by each Minister?

Dr. Padayachy: I will table a copy.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 28217.002 – *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*, can we have some details about this item , the list of cases where the Government had to pay damages – Rs25 million?

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

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 490, Item 28211.024 – *Financial Support to Religious Bodies*, will the hon. Minister table a list of the different allocations to the different type of support to Religious Bodies?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, I will.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21210.002 – *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*, will the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of the number of these pension schemes and how much is unfunded behind this scheme?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision represents Government contribution towards the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme for officers joining the Civil Service as from 01 January 2013. It is managed by SICOM Ltd. The rate of contribution is 12% of employee's basic salary by Government and 6% of their basic salary by employees. The high provision is made mainly due to increases in salaries of officers following the award of 2024 salary compensation and the recruitment of additional staff in Financial Year 2024-2025.

So, Government has contributed Rs727.3 million during the period 01 July 2023 to 31 May 2024. Presently, we have some 23,139 public officers who are contributing towards this scheme compared to 21,969 in June 2023.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Item 22160 – *Overseas Training* – Rs15 million has been budgeted for the period 2024-25. Can we have some details with regard to this item?

Dr. Padayachy: This is provision required in respect of overseas training to be attended by public officers. The breakdown of the mission is as follows –

- Rs9 million for payment of air tickets;
- Rs5 million for payment of Subsistence Allowance;
- Rs8.8 million for tuition fees and Rs0.2 million for other expenses.

The increase is mainly to cater for higher number of public officers participating in such trainings.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 25-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs3,340,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(11.14 a.m.)

Vote 26-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

The Chairperson: We are now page 491. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 22900.098 – *Expenses icw Demolition of Building/Structure* – we see that last year, there was a sum of Rs100 million being provided for but from this year onwards, this provision is no longer existant. Can I ask the Minister which building is being referred to and why has this project been cancelled?

Dr. Padayachy: It was for the demolition of the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. The sum has not been spent under this item.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I want a clarification from the Minister. But it seems that from this year onwards, no provision is being made. Has this project been abandoned?

Dr. Padayachy: It has been put on hold.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Under the same Item 22900.098 – *Expenses icw Demolitin of Building/Structure* – the Minister just said that the amount budgeted has been spent?

Dr. Padayachy: No, it is not spent.

The Chairperson: May I remind hon. members to kindly address the Chairperson? Thank you. Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 25210.008 – *VAT Refund Scheme for Planters, Breeders, Fishers and Other Specific Sectors*, can we know from the Minister how many applicants benefitted from the refund?

Dr. Padayachy: As at May 2024, Rs7 million has been refunded to some 280 beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad. Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 491, Item 22030 – *Rent*, we find that last year, a sum was earmarked for it – Rs100 million. Now from this year onwards, that item has completely disappeared from the Estimates. May we know the reason?

Dr. Padayachy: Again, the provision was made to cater for the relocation of Ministries and departments from the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. We have put the project on hold. So, we do not need to cater for that.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.010 – *Service to Mauritius Programme*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of beneficiaries?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision made for payment of allowances to 300 interns under the Service to Mauritius Programme. Presently, there are 169 interns who have been posted in various Ministries and Departments. There are 4 laureates and 2 persons with disability under the Programme. It is expected that some 131 interns would be enlisted in the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Thank you Mr Chairperson. *Item 22120.040 – Expert Skills Scheme* of Rs40 million has been budgeted. Can we have some details with regard to this?

Dr. Padayachy: It is provision made for procurement of the services of experts and specialised professionals by Ministries and Departments for timely design implementation and operationalization of public sector policies, projects and schemes. The increase is mainly to cater for additional requirements of Ministries and Departments. Presently, the services of 57 experts have been procured in areas where there are lack of skills and expertise.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 492. Hon. Ramful.

Mr Ramful: Item 28215.015 – *Support to Operators for Gas Oil*, this was announced early this year. I see no money has been spent. Does that mean that no one has benefited from this support?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is made for the refund of Rs5 per litre of diesel. I have got information from the MRA that Rs50 million will be spent in this year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 28216.019 – *AFRITAC South and IMF Training Institute*, we see a considerable increase in budget. Can we know from the hon. Minister the reason for same?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision represents Government contribution for phase 3 of the activities of AFRITAC South, AFS and IMF Training Institute in Mauritius. The host countries in Mauritius have been hosting AFRITAC South and IMF Training Institute since 18 April 2011 and 19 April 2013.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 28212. 045 – *Independence Scheme*, peut-on savoir combien des jeunes ont bénéficié de ce *scheme* pour l'année passée s'il vous plaît ?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is made for payment of a one-off allowance of Rs20,000 to youth on reaching 18years. For Financial year 2023-2024, during the 17 months' period from January 2023 to May 2024, around Rs416 million has been paid to some 21,000 beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item 28213.029 – *State Trading Corporation*, can I know from the hon. Minister the detailed breakdown of the pay-package of the Director of the STC and also the expenses incurred in terms of air tickets for overseas mission and *per diem*?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision required to compensate the STC for deficit in the subsidy account for LPG, flour and rice in Financial Years 2021-22 and 2022-23. The reason for deficit; the deficit in the subsidy account are mainly due to the increase in the international prices of LPG, flour and rice. The STC is selling LPG and rice well below their market prices in line with our policy to subsidies these products as follows –

- At the time, Rs240 for the 20kg cylinder against the actual price of Rs560; and
- The rice at Rs10.80 per kilo compared to actual price of Rs35.

The total deficit in the subsidy account amount to Rs1.115 billion as Rs872 m. in Financial Year 2021-22 and Rs243 m. in 2022-23.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Page 492, Item 26210.221 – *IMF - Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust*. We find that only for this financial year a sum of Rs62 m. has been earmarked. We don't find it for last year and we don't find it afterwards as well. It is a one-off budgetary measure.

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is required for a contribution of Rs1 m. SDR towards the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust. Mauritius will pay the contribution into the PRGT subsidy reserve account from its existing SDR holding. In July 2023, IMF had requested Mauritius to consider making a pledge of 1 m. SDR to fund the PRGT subsidy account.

This pledge was proportional to our quota share in the fund raising target as a gesture of solidarity towards the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Mauritius has agreed to the request and has informed the IMF that it would disburse the grant in July 2024. The Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) is the main vehicle through which the IMF offers concessional financing to low income countries for poverty reduction.

The funding, the PRGT borrows money from advanced countries at market interest rates and on lend those funds to low income countries at a below market rate. This rate is currently zero. The PRGT uses funds from the subsidy account to fill the gap in the interest it earns from low income countries and the interest it pays to advanced countries as such, the IMF needs more subsidy sources to continue its concessional lending.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28214.001 – *Mauritius Africa Fund Ltd.* Every year we budget an amount of Rs20 m., may I know from the hon. Minister the number of staff which this Mauritius Africa Fund Ltd has and the amount of project that is funded by that company?

Dr. Padayachy: The Mauritius Africa Fund Ltd (MAF) was incorporated in February 2014 and fully owned by Government of Mauritius. The main objective is to spearhead Mauritian investment in Africa by participating in the development of integrated projects in selected African countries under a Government to Government framework. The areas of intervention include Special Economic Zones, Technology parks, Logistics parks, Agro industrial and Seafood parks and other projects of strategic interest to Mauritius.

Currently MFA employs 7 persons –

- 1 Manager, Project Finance and Intuitional Relations;
- 1 Manager, Project and Market Intelligence;
- 4 Management Support Assistants; and
- 1 Attendant.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 28212.041 – *CSG Income Allowance*. An amount of Rs9,950,000,000 have been earmarked, may we have more details from the Minister please?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision required for payment of CSG Income Allowance, that is, Government is going to pay for these allowances to employees and registered self-employed individuals as follow –

- i) Rs3000 for those earning up to Rs20,000;
- ii) Rs2500 for those earning above Rs20,000 and up to Rs25,000;
- iii) Rs2000 to those earning above Rs25,000 and up to Rs30,000; and
- iv) Rs1500 to those earning above Rs30,000 and up to Rs50,000.

The scheme was introduced as from July 2022 and the Mauritius Revenue Authority has the responsibility to pay the allowance to the beneficiaries. The increase in provision is mainly due to the fact that the rates of the CSG Allowance will be increased as from July 2024. Those employees earning up to Rs25,000 monthly will receive an allowance of Rs3000 or Rs2500 compared to the allowance of Rs2000 they are currently receiving.

The number of beneficiaries is around 320,000 employees and self-employed individuals who will benefit the schemes, some 110,000 will receive a monthly allowance of Rs3000. Some 55,000 beneficiaries will receive a monthly allowance of Rs2500. Some 50,000 beneficiaries will receive a monthly allowance of Rs2000 and the remaining 115,000 beneficiaries will receive Rs1000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 493. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 32315.201 – *Subscription to International Monetary Fund (IMF)*. I can see that the amount has been increased from Rs20 m. to Rs1.120 billion.

Dr. Padayachy: The provision for Rs1.1 billion for payment in connection with 50% increase in member's quota and Rs20m. for making expenses incurred by the IMF in managing the SDR account of Mauritius.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 493, Item 31121.801 – *Acquisition of Vehicles*. For last Financial Year, there was an estimate of Rs75 m. Can we have the name of the supplier, type of vehicle and cost for each please?

Dr. Padayachy: Acquisition of Official cars for senior Civil servants and eligible Members of the National Assembly. I will table the information.

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

Mr Bhagwan: Item 32155.075 – *Mauritius Housing Holdings Ltd.* Rs6 m. something, can we have the details of what specific purpose this amount being budgeted?

Dr. Padayachy: So, Rs6 billion to enable the company to, in turn; inject funds in Building Society Fund. Ltd, one of its subsidiaries with a view to mobilizing additional resources for financing social housing projects and Rs20 million for meeting operating expenses. The Rs6 billion will be used as seed capital so as to facilitate the Building Society Fund Ltd to raise Rs7.3 billion from potential investors as a bridging finance for the construction of the 8,000 social housing units. The construction of the 8,000 social housing units will cost around Rs22 billion. Two-thirds of this amount, Rs14.7 billion is being provided by Government.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over.

Vote 26-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives Of Government (Rs36,920,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(11.34 a.m.)

Vote 27-1 Contingencies and Reserves was called.

The Chairperson: Page 494, hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 27-1: *Total Expenditure of which Recurrent* Rs600 million was earmarked last year and this year as well. May I know from the Minister out of the Rs600 million, how much was spent in year ended 30 June 2024?

Dr. Padayachy: As at 31 May 2024, out of the total voted provision of Rs800 million, an amount of Rs763 million has been reallocated. Rs569.5 million from the recurrent provision and Rs183.5 million from the Capital Provision. Out of the recurrent provision of Rs600 million, Rs569.5 million has been reallocated as per list I will table.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister.

Vote 27-1 Contingencies and Reserves (Rs1,100,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.36 a.m.)

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

The Chairperson: So, we are at Sub-Head 8-101: General, page 231. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, peut-on savoir la liste des bénéficiaires de cet item et leurs salary package ?

Mr Lesjongard: I can table the list, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Do we have more questions on page 231? No? We move to page 232. Hon. Assirvaden?

Mr Assirvaden: Merci Chairperson. A l'item 26313.0968 – *Utility Regulatory Authority*, est-ce qu'on peut avoir la composition du Board ainsi que le Chairman ?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I shall table the list of the Chairperson and Commissioners. The Chairperson is Mr Pratabsing Bacorisen.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank You Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, will the hon. Minister give us a detailed account of how these fees were paid and to whom?

Mr Lesjongard: These fees are paid to the departmental Bid Committee and other committees. I do not have the information. I shall table the requested information, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vais vous demander de bien vouloir vous assurer que les informations qui sont demandées sont bel et bien déposées sur la table parce que très souvent, toutes les années, les ministres disent qu'ils vont déposer les informations et ne le font pas, en particulier le ministre qui est concerné.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. member. May I request all hon. Ministers to kindly table all information as has been discussed in the Chamber.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the Item 26313.098 *Grant of which Utility Regulatory Authority*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Chief Executive's post been filled?

Mr Lesjongard: No, I understand that they had advertised the post but they have not yet recruited a Chief Executive, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, we have a sum of Rs 14,900,000. Can we have some details on it, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, this Item caters for rental charges including parking slots for offices located at Air Mauritius Building and Celicourt Building. Increase in provision is to cater for indexing of rental charges. The total rent per year for Celicourt Tower is Rs 4,716,144. The total area occupied is 10,051.45 square feet. It is located on the 4th and 8th floors. The period of contract is from 01 September 2022 to 31 August 2025. The owner is C.K. Property Ltd. With regard to the other one, I understand that there is rental of 31 parking slots

and then there is also rental at Medcor, SIF. Mr Chairperson, for the Air Mauritius Building, the total rent per year is Rs8,413,764 and the total area rented is 10,917 square feet.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over. We move to Sub-Head 8-102: Energy Services. We are on page 233. Hon. Assirvaden.

Mr Assirvaden: Merci Chairperson. A la page 233, l'item 22130.001 – *Studies and Surveys*, pour l'année dernière, je vois R 39 millions. Cette année-ci, c'est R 24 millions. Il y a quand même une réduction conséquente. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir quelle est la compagnie qui mène ces études et ces *surveys*? Est-ce qu'un rapport préliminaire a été déposé ?

Mr Lesjongard: There are a series of studies and projects. Are you requesting information for a particular one as there are (a), (b) and so on?

Mr Assirvaden: Tout est regroupé sous l'item – 22130.001. Si vous avez un breakdown, donc rapidement, oui!

Mr Lesjongard: Non, rapidement je ne peux pas. Je vais prendre mon temps pour donner les informations.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! May I request hon. Members to kindly address the Chairperson and from Item 22130, I see there is a series of Surveys (a) to (f). So, will you...

Mr Lesjongard: I will give the information, Mr Chairperson. So –

(a) Consultancy on Electric Vehicles: the amount has been provided in the Budget 2024-2025 to promote for awareness raising and capacity building in the context of electric mobility. The EV Regulations have been finalised and will be promulgated soon. Thereafter, the Ministry will undertake awareness and sensitisation campaigns. A video clip on energy conservation measures related to the Land Transport Sector has been prepared by the

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, one second, please. We have a point of order. Hon. Assirvaden, what is your point of order?

Mr Assirvaden: Le ministre ne répond pas à ma question. Ma question est : quelle est la compagnie qui fait ces études et ces *surveys* ? Aussi simple que ça !

The Chairperson: Okay. May I request the hon. Minister to table the list of information?

Mr Assirvaden: Il faut dire !

The Chairperson: Since we have 5 items, would you have any particular item that you wish to be informed about?

Mr Assirvaden: Mr Chairperson, c'est assez simple de donner les 6-7 compagnies qui font ces surveys.

Mr Lesjongard: I will circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I heard a remark from the hon. Member stating '*aret kasyet*'. Can he withdraw that word, Mr Chairperson, because whatever information I do not have and this is for any Minister, we table the information at a later stage.

The Chairperson: Noted!

Mr Assirvaden: Mr *Chairperson*, I withdraw mais j'ai demandé au Ministre de dire 6-7 compagnies. C'est assez rapide. Pourquoi ne pas dire ?

The Chairperson: We have already dealt with this one. The hon. Minister is going to table the list of all the consultants as per your request. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. Item 22900.009 – (a) *Energy Efficiency Management Office*. Can I ask the Minister to provide the names of the people who are in charge and who are working in this Office?

Mr Lesjongard: The staff list is as follows –

- 1) Oomeshwar Sewtohul, Director, Energy Efficiency;
- 2) Mr Keeshav Ramkurren, Acting Lead Engineer;
- 3) Mrs Nawsheen Sooruth, Engineer/ Senior Engineer;
- 4) Ms Samiah Mohangee, Engineer/ Senior Engineer;
- 5) Mr Muhammad Ziyaad Toofany, Engineer/ Senior Engineer;
- 6) Mr Dinesh Mahadawoo, Technical Officer;
- 7) Ms Diksha Gaonjur, Technical Officer;
- 8) Ms Sardha Macarchand, Confidential Secretary to Director;
- 9) Mrs Tanuja Murrakhan, Management Support Officer, and
- 10) Mr Gauwrish Sunya Naiko, STM

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.099 – (b) *Awareness on Energy Efficiency*, an amount of Rs400,000 is being earmarked. Can we have more details for this item please?

Mr Lesjongard: This Item caters for the organisation of energy efficiency competitions and development of energy efficiency awareness raising materials.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Under Item 26313.139 – *Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)*, may I know from the hon. Minister the pay-packet of the CEO of MARENA and his qualifications?

Mr Lesjongard: The CEO is Mr Danen Beemadoo and he derives a monthly salary of Rs110,125 plus salary compensation at approved rates along with car benefits, travelling allowance as per regulations in force.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 233 Item 22120 – *Fees*, will the hon. Minister table the list or give us details regarding the fees and to whom are they payable?

Mr Lesjongard: This Item provides for payment of fees to Chairman and Members of Board and Committees under the Energy Efficiency Committee. I have some additional information –

- Energy Efficiency Technical and Sub-Committee – Rs200,000;
- Energy Efficiency Committee – Rs150,000;
- Fees to the Chairman – Rs 350,000;
- Refund of subscription fees to professional bodies – Rs18,000 and

It comes to a total of Rs718,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms. J. Bérenger.

Ms. J. Bérenger : Item 26313.139 – *Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)*, pourraient-on savoir le salary package de la présidente à temps partiel et ses qualifications?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, the Chairperson of MARENA Board is Mrs Martine Gontier. She was appointed on 05 October 2023 and she has a monthly salary of Rs32,000. She has an LLB from the University of London and an LLM from the University of Central Lancashire and she has experienced in regulatory services, energy regulation, and financial services. I will table the CV.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over. We move to Sub-Head 8-103: Water Services. Page 234, Hon. Ramful.

Mr Ramful: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultant – (a) Review of Legislation for Water Sector*, may we know who is the Consultant who has been appointed and when will the registration be ready?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision is also made for fees to Chairman and members of Bid Committees, fees for training, consultancy for drafting of Water Resources Bill, refund of subscription fees to professional bodies. Mr Chairperson, the increase is to cater for enlistment of services of Honorable Asraf Caunhye, former Chief Justice, as Legal Consultant to support the AGO in the drafting of the Water Resources Bill. I understand that the Bill has now been finalised and that the final draft has been submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 28223.010 – (j) *New Plaine Lauzun pumping station to Upper Monneron reservoir*. Last year, the Minister promised that this project would have started in November 2023 but it never started and meanwhile, my constituents of Vallée Pitôt and Tranquebar are having a lot of water supply problems. So, can I ask the Minister...?

The Chairperson: Can I stop you there, hon. member? We are going to stick to the provisions in the Budget Item. Hon. Minister!

Mr Lesjongard: The procurement proceedings have been cancelled due to value of bids received exceeding cost estimates by more than 25% and new bids will have to be launched.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can we have an indication of the timeframe?

Mr Lesjongard: I do not have this information, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: 28223.010 – *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme – (k) Mahebourg*, may we have more details from the Minister please?

Mr Lesjongard: Funds provided for the implementation of the pipe replacement project in Mahebourg in 3 phases –

- Phase 1 – laying of approximately 5.3 Km of pipe awarded to Serveng Ltd. It was awarded on November 2023 and expected completion date is July of this year. An amount of Rs18,688,503.64 have already been disbursed.

- Phase 2 – the works consists mainly of installation of necessary pipes and fittings, testing and commissioning of proximately 6.9 Km of 110mm diameter HDPE pipe and 1.7 Km of 160 mm diameter HDPE pipe.

I understand that the contract has been awarded to Enviro Business Intelligence Ltd. Date of award is April 2024 and completion date is June 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, we are being asked to vote *environ R 1.2 milliards sur cet item avec les sous-items concernant le* Pipe Replacement Programme. Can the Minister let us know whether this money, which is being given to CWA, is being given from Government Fund and what are the controls that we have? Recently, we have seen an Audit Report concerning the contracts given. What are the measures which the Minister has put in place? Because we all know that instead of Central Water Authority, it is Central Waste Authority these days.

Mr Lesjongard: There was a Special Board Meeting which was held and they took the following decisions –

- 1) To conduct an enquiry on the comments made by the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 2) An internal enquiry will also be carried out regarding leakage of documents and information.

I understand that CWA will have to submit a follow-up report on the recommendation of the internal report of the Pipe Replacement Programme and also necessary arrangements have been made for the continued operation of the Internal Control Unit of the CWA.

Mr Chairperson, let me remind the member that with regard to controlling the Pipe Replacement Programme...

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, may I stop you there? This is a Committee of Supply so we are not going to indulge in details of administration like we have referred to in the Standing Order 73. So we are going to move on.

Thank you, Minister. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Merci Chairperson. Item 22130.005 – *Studies on Water Resources and Development*, encore une fois les 5 millions de l'année dernière, et cette année-ci, 16 millions. Comme ma question précédente concernant des *surveys and studies*, est-ce que je peux savoir du Ministre en ce qui concerne cet item spécifique, quelle la compagnie qui fait ces études et ces *surveys* ?

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that for the consultancy, it is under evaluation and the project is being funded by AFD. With regard to La Nicolière Dam, the Consultant is SMEC.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 28222.014 – *Water Tank Grant Scheme*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of applications received under that Scheme and the number of successful applicants? I want to know how many applied and benefited from that scheme.

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that as far as applications which are being processed by the Development Bank of Mauritius, 43,000 applicants have already received and installed their domestic water tanks and domestic water pumps as at 31 May 2024. At the level of the Ministry, from April 2011 to February 2022, 62,948 applications have been approved for a water tank only and 27,365 for a water tank and a pump.

The Chairperson: Are you done hon. Minister?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

The Chairperson: Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: On page 235, Item 28223.015 – *Central Water Authority Other Water Distribution Works (d) Renewal of equipment and distribution pumps at water treatment plants*. Can I know from the hon. Minister, whether he has got a list of where these are being done, particularly for the region of Port Louis?

The Chairperson: We are going to take pages 235 and 236 together.

Mr Lesjongard: I cannot find information, Mr Chairperson. Maybe I will table the list at a later stage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: On page 235, Item 31113.002 – *Construction of Dams – Rivière des Anguilles*, I see that a whopping figure of Rs7.8 billion has been provided for. Can we know the names therefore – the project is on tract seemingly now – of the consultant and contractor for this project because disbursement has been scientifically calculated, it seems?

If you look at the rows and columns you will see that every year the exact figure to be disbursed is...

Mr Lesjongard: That I know! But what do you want to know?

Mr Osman Mahomed: The name of the consultant and contractors.

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that the consultant for the Rivière des Anguilles Dam is Studio Pietrangeli and with regard to the contractors, bidding exercise for the prequalification of contractors for the construction of the dam has been launched on 21 February 2024 and evaluation is ongoing at the Central Procurement Board and they have not yet appointed the contractor.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31113.402 – Upgrading of Dams (a) La Ferme. *Il y a un project value de R 625 millions et maintenant on nous demande de voter R 63 millions.* Can we know where we have reached with the upgrading of the La Ferme reservoir, whether any consultancy has already been done, if yes, by whom and what are the schedules for the construction of works?

Mr Lesjongard: The consultancy services for the Design Review (Phase 1) and Construction Supervision (Phase 2) for the rehabilitation of the La Ferme Dam was awarded to Studio Pietrangeli in December 2020. Phase 1 services started in August 2021 and the consultant recommended additional geotechnical investigations. The geotechnical investigations works

have been procured under a separate contract and have been completed in May 2023. Prequalification exercise for works is expected to be launched by July 2024 and a shortlist of contractors, ready by November 2024. The award of works contract is expected by February 2025 and completion by May 2027. The above schedule is however, subject to progress made on the relocation of squatters downstream of La Ferme Dam. Housing units are being constructed by the NHDC at La Valette to relocate the squatters.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time over!

Sub-Head 8-104: Wastewater Services. We are going to take pages 236 and 237 together. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 32145.517 – *Wastewater Management Authority – Repairs/Maintenance/Upgrading of Sewerage Infrastructure*. May we know the places they are concerned by this project?

Mr Lesjongard: This concerns sewer maintenance and repair works of sewerage infrastructure and upgrading of wastewater treatment plants –

- (i) Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of wastewater pumps accessories and associated works at Petit Camp;
- (ii) Supply, installation of new pump, complete, at Roche Bois Pumping Station;
- (iii) Procurement, supply, installation, testing of buoy at Baie du Tombeau sea outfall, and
- (iv) At Grand Baie, wastewater pumps and associated works.

So, the places are: Grand Baie, Roche Bois, and Petit Camp.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 32155.316 – *Wastewater Management Authority*, I see that last year there was an amount of Rs1,110,000,000 that was earmarked as Shares and Equity Participation.

Can the Minister circulate the total amount of shares and equity participation in terms of value? If he does not have it, can he circulate it?

Mr Lesjongard: I do not have the information with me right now but I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Chairperson, page 236, Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, I am very specific to know about who heads the Wastewater Management Authority and what is the pay package, and the members of that Authority?

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Board of Directors –

- (i) Mr Louis Jean Bernard Perrine, Chairperson with a monthly fee of Rs70,000 with allowances and other benefits amounting to Rs10,200;
- (ii) Mr Navindranath Jowaheer, General Manager since 20 March 2024 with a basic salary of Rs119,500 with compensation of Rs3,400, travelling allowance and other benefits as per PRB 2021 and a monthly allowance of Rs45,000.

The Chairperson: Moving on to page 237 Sub-Head 8-105 – Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Services. Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Item 26210.074 – *International Atomic and Energy Agency (Regular Budget)* Can I know from the hon. Minister the scope of benefits of these contributions in regards to nuclear medicine.

Mr Lesjongard: I hope I have the information with me. It is in terms of capacity building, acquisition of equipment but I do not have more detailed information. I wanted to have more detailed information.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Mr Lesjongard: I do not have more detailed information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know to whom this extra assistance is paid being to please?

Mr Lesjongard: This Item, Mr Chairperson, caters for services of a Legal officer and Communication officer on contract to support the RSNSA in delivery of its objective. The Legal officer to be recruited on a contractual basis and will provide assistance to RSNSA for an effective enforcement of Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Act 2018 and also the Communication officer to be recruited on a contractual basis for a period of one year, both for a period of one year and will be responsible to promote activities to improve radiation safety and nuclear security awareness in the country. The PSC has been requested to advertise both positions.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Lesjongard: No. I said the PSC has been requested to advertise both positions.

The Chairperson: Please address the Chair. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060 – *Maintenance*. We have noticed that there has been an increase by 3 times from Rs200,000 to Rs600,000. Can we have some details on the cost?

Mr Lesjongard: This is to meet the cost of –

- i) Maintenance of buildings, Rs50,000;
- ii) Plant and equipment, Rs500,000; and
- iii) Vehicle, Rs50,000.

This Item has increased due to regular maintenance of items, systems. As an example, calibration of radiation detecting equipment, IT and LAN system.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time over.

Vote 8-1 Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (Rs4,630,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to

I will now suspend the sitting for 5 minutes. Thank you.

At 12.18 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.30 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Please be seated!

Vote 9-1 Social Integration was called.

(12.30 p.m.)

The Chairperson: We are now on Sub-Head 9-101 – General. Page 245, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know to whom this Extra Assistance is being paid to please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provisions made to cater for the salary of one Adviser in Public Relation Matters; Mr Javed Soyfoo.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 246, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Sub-Head 9-10. Can we do that now or? Okay, Item 27210.014...

The Chairperson: No, we are on Sub-Head 9-101 – General. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Qurin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – Rent. There is an increase of Rs1 m. from last Financial Year to 2024-25. Can we have some explanation with regard to this increase, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, provisions made for payment of rental of 2 buildings at Air Mauritius Centre and Victoria House. I understand that there has been an increase in the rent. For example, rental of the 2 buildings from Rs6.8 m. to Rs7.7 m. and rental of 9 parking from Rs500,000 to Rs600,000 so, there has been an increase in the rent.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*. Can we have more details about those studies and surveys and can we know who the consultants are?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, a tender was launched on 27 October 2022 through open advertised bidding for the provisions of consultancy services for a study on the impact of training provided to SRM beneficiaries, closing date was in November 2022, no responsive bidding. So, a second tender exercise was launched in February 2023, closing date was February 2023. On 28 March 2023, Soft Skills Consultants Mauritius Ltd was awarded the contract. Unfortunately, the Ministry has had to terminate the contract as consultant failed to submit the draft final report. So, we are back to square one.

The Chairperson: Sub-Head 9-102: Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment, on pages 246 and 247. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.014 – *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty) (b) Educational Support – iv. School Materials*. There was an estimate of Rs113 m. for last financial year, can we have a breakdown and can we know whether this amount has been fully spent or partly spent and the name of the supplier, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For this year, there has been a change in policy so cash grant in lieu of school materials. The reason is because procurement procedure was quite lengthy and time consuming. So, we have disbursed cash grants to all beneficiaries and we have disbursed Rs59,983,000 to some 12,043 children.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.014 – *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty) (a) Empowerment Support Scheme*. There is an increase for the amount budgeted for this period, can we know why so?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is because the subsistence allowance has been increased from Rs1000 to Rs1500 as from 01 July 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 27210.014 – *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty)* (b) *Educational Support*. I see a decrease in the budget for the next financial year, can we know why?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It is based on the actual trends of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Mr Chairperson, the same Item 27210.014 – *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty)* (b) *Educational Support – iii. Child Allowance*. An amount of Rs60 m. has been earmarked, may we know from the Minister how many beneficiaries are there?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is an incentive to encourage parents to send their children to school. We have some 4132 children.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 26313.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation (d) Other Programmes*, can we have more details about this item, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: There are many items that fall under this: mobile technology services, medical screening, special scheme, start-up kits for unemployed beneficiaries, spectacles to needy students, sanitary towels, diapers to children, enrolling talents programmes, and recreational activities for students. There is a panoply of activities for beneficiaries falling under SRM.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Item 27210.014 – *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty)* (b) *Educational Support – iii. Child Allowance*. La ministre vient de nous dire que c'est un *allowance* pour encourager les élèves d'aller à l'école mais peut-elle nous donner la raison pour laquelle il y a une baisse considérable pour l'année 2024-25, merci ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is the actual trend of expenditure, *c'est ce qu'on a l'habitude de dépenser chaque année.*

Ms Anquetil: De R 145 millions à R 60 millions ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, because...

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Minister and hon. Anquetil, may I ask you both to, please, kindly address the Chair and this applies to all hon. Members.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Chairperson, to enlighten the hon. Member, last year an amount of on Rs43 m. was paid as child allowance.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 246, Item 26313.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation (a) Operating Costs.* Can the Minister give us some details about this foundation, who is the chairperson, his remuneration, the CEO? I still remember, last time there was somebody without any qualification who was appointed. What are the qualifications and the salary of the one who is the chief operating officer or CEO of the National Empowerment Foundation?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For the time being, we do not have a CEO. So, pending the filling of the post, Mrs Jogessur is acting as Officer-in-Charge. The Chairperson is Dr. Raffick Sorefan.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 247, Item 26323.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups – i. Construction of Social Housing Units*, will this apply to Rodrigues and other outer islands? There is an increase to Rs40 m.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Normally in all the incentives given to the SRM beneficiaries, Rodrigues is always part of our measures and policies.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Same Item 26323.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups – i. Construction of Social Housing Units*, for which last year, Rs29 m. was budgeted for. Can I ask the hon. Minister, Mr Chairperson, through you, to table the list of regions and beneficiaries' names? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, I will communicate the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: on the same Item 26323.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups – i. Construction of Social Housing Units*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of applications received for social housing units and the number of social housing units actually delivered to beneficiaries under the NEF Programme?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For the social housing units, we have two types. The fully concrete housing, for those beneficiaries who have their land; we construct a house for the beneficiaries up to an amount of Rs1.2 m. It is on demand, if we have the demand then we construct the house but with regard to NHDC, we have a list of 2000 SRM beneficiaries who are on the list waiting for a house.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you. Concerning Item 26323.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups – ii. Upgrading of Existing Houses*. Can the hon. Minister elaborate and inform the house about the type of houses? What is the item Rs3 m. for?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: As I have said earlier, if the person does have a portion of land, he is the owner of a portion of land, he can contact NEF and the Ministry and then the needful will be done to construct house for the beneficiary to the tune of Rs1.2 m. The repayment capacity, 18% of the cost is funded by government and the beneficiary only has to reimburse 20% of the cost of the house and he has a duration of 35 years for to repay.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.0135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups – i. Construction of Social Housing Units*. There is an amount of Rs40 m. which is budgeted. May I ask the hon. Minister how many housing units is budgeted to be constructed in Constituency No. 3?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I do not have this answer. If I get the answer I will pass it over to you. But I do know that we are expecting to acquire 51 NHDC housing units from Solitude, Quatre Cocos ... It depends on the area where the construction is being carried out. If the NHDC is constructing houses in Port Louis, then we will buy 10%; if it is in Quatre Bornes, we will buy 10%. Anywhere around the island, wherever there are constructions by NHDC, NEF will acquire 10% of the housing units constructed.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time over!

Vote 9-1 Social Integration (Rs1,007,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.44 p.m.)

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity was called.

The Chairperson: We are now at Sub-Head 9-201: General. We have two pages: 249 and 250. We are going to take both of them together. No questions we move on. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know to whom the budgeted amount is paid – name and amount?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for payment of three Advisers –

- (i) Ms Seetamonee, Adviser on Information Matters, drawing a salary of Rs66,200;
- (ii) Ms Sahabally, drawing a salary of Rs62,700;
- (iii) Ms Luchoo, drawing a salary of Rs47,675.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to Sub-Head 9-202: Social Protection. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Concerning Item 22090 – *Security*, can we know the name of the service provider or providers?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Quick Security Guards Ltd, Top Security Services Ltd. The list is quite long; I will circulate at a later stage.

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

Dr. Aumeer: Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the number of doctors that are involved in such programmes and how much they paid per visit?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: There are 381 medical practitioners, drawing Rs650 per session.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 27210.012 – *Assistance and Training of Disabled Persons*, can we know the number of disabled persons who benefited from the assistance and training, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 2298 children attending 47 specialised schools.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 251, Item 22140 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*. May the hon. Minister inform the house what are the medical supplies, drugs and equipment and why the sum allocated has remained the same?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The provision is for the purchase of 60,000 doses of influenza vaccines to be used for elderly persons aged 60 and above, inmates of charitable institutions, licensed homes and SEN schools – every year it is the same trend.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may we know from the hon. Minister how many visits have been conducted?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 297,492 for period July 2023 to April 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold.

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.002 – *Social Aid of which Assistance to Professional Fishermen*, may I know how many fishermen are involved in the Republic of Mauritius?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 2,300 fishermen.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président, page 251, Item 27220.002 – *Assistance to Parents of Disabled Children*, peut-on connaître le nombre de parents bénéficiaires s'il vous plaît, merci ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: 2000 parents.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Concerning Item 26313.093 – *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*, can we know the chairperson and members of this board and the allocation being paid to them?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Composition of the Board –

- (i) Mrs Maria Magdalena Cassim, Chairperson;
- (ii) Mrs Mukool-Munoruth, a representative of the Ministry;
- (iii) Mrs Aumeer, representative of Labour;
- (iv) Mr Sawon, representative of MITD;

- (v) Mrs Hosany, representative of the Social Integration Division
- (vi) Mr Choytun, representative of the Social Security Division, and
- (vii) Mrs Naidu, representative of Trade Unions, amongst others.

The Chairperson: thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the same Item *26313.093 – Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*, last year Rs12 m., this year also Rs12 m., but isn't this Board being replaced by the National Empowerment Authority; we have just voted a Bill in that favour so, why are we still funding that Board.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We have to wait for the establishment of the said National Empowerment Foundation; we have to set up the authority. So, in the meantime, we have to cater for the services offered by the institutions like TEDPB.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. le président. L'item *27210.017 – Social Aid for Assistive Devices*, l'année dernière on a voté un montant de R 135 millions et cette année on nous demande de voter R 139.5 millions. Aujourd'hui, il y a un système de voucher qui a été assez restrictif, est-ce que la ministre pense revoir ce système et revoir également...

The Chairperson: We are not going to go into the details of this question because this looks more like a PQ. Hon. Ms Anquetil, you have a question?

Ms Anquetil: Item *31112.401 – Upgrading of Office Buildings – (Social Security Offices)*, peut-on savoir de la ministre si les bureaux de la sécurité sociale de Vacoas et Curepipe sont concernés par ces rénovations, merci ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo : *Malheureusement, non.* It is upgrading works at Grand Gaube.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time over! Moving on to Sub-Head 9-203: National Pension Management on pages 252 and 253. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 253, Item 27210.101 – *Basic Retirement Pension*, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many people from Rodrigues and Agalega are involved?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: In all, I have 261,437. Laissez-moi voir les détails.

The Chairperson: In the meantime we are going to take the question from hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Page 253, Item 27210.201 – *Payments i.c.w Injury at Work (Social Benefits)*, peut-on savoir de la ministre quel est le délai prévu pour l'ostension de ce paiement, merci ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The allowance is paid as long as the employee is in a state of incapacity. So, on recovery, he will not get the payment of Industrial Injury Allowance.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. le président. À la page 252, l'Item 22030 – *Rent*, le loyer a augmenté de R 2.2 millions à R 6.6 millions. Peut-on avoir les détails sur cette augmentation ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The increase is due to the valuation report. There has been an increase in the rate of rent following a valuation report.

To reply to the hon. Member who asked the question on the number of beneficiaries of basic retirement pension in Rodrigues, it is 5972.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 253, Item 27210.101 – *Basic Retirement Pension*. I noticed an increase of more than Rs13 billion, can the Minister please explain the reason of this increase?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is because there has been an increase in the rate of pensions from 60 to 64, 65 to 74, 75 to 89, 90 to 99 and our centenarians.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mr Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 252, Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards Domiciliary Visits*, why has the sun remained the same instead of decreasing due to change in government policy?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This concerns fees; there is no change to fees of Medical Boards and domiciliary visits. There has not been a change in policy.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity (Rs67,343,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour.

At 1.01 p.m. the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.14 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

Vote 10-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance was called.

The Chairperson: We are on Sub-Head 10-101: General on page 261. Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 261, Item 21110.005 – Extra Assistance, Rs1.3 m., may we have the details of this figure?

Mr Bholah: This figure refers to salaries and allowances of Advisers and one PRO –

- (i) Mr Gunness, Senior Adviser with salary Rs77,950 monthly;
- (ii) Mr Ravi Dhoorundhur, Adviser with salary Rs27,400;
- (iii) Mrs Kurreembokus, Adviser with salary Rs66,200, and

(iv) Mr Ashvin Luchmun, PRO with salary Rs27,200.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to page 262. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 26313.140 – *Integrity Reporting Services Agency*. Can we know how many confiscation orders have been granted by the court to the IRS and what amount of money does that represent?

Mr Bholah: Mr Chairperson, you will note that this Agency has now moved under the Prime Minister's Office. I do not have any information with regard to this.

The Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 26313.114 – *National Committee on Corporate Governance of which Review of the National Corporate Governance*. Can we know about the provision for which we are asked to vote an amount of Rs9.2 m.?

Mr Bholah: Provision has been made for the recruitment of staff, appointment of consultants for evaluation of firms against corporate governance scorecard for Mauritius for 2023 and review of the Code of Corporate Governance 2016. So, the appointment of consultants and evaluation of corporate governance practices and review of the Code of Corporate Governance which will be reviewed by OECD; this is why there is an increase in the amount. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 262, Item 26313.015 – *Financial Intelligence Unit*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if ever he has the information, if not, he can circulate it later, the number of SDR that has been raised, investigated and resolved?

Mr Bholah: I will circulate the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Concerning Item 22030 – *Rent*, can we know why there is an increase in the amount, and the name of the building?

Mr Bholah: Provision is made for the rental of SICOM Building, parking slots, and rental of photocopy machines. With regard to the rental of office space, it is at SICOM Building at a rate of Rs45.08 per square foot.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122 – *Other Machinery and Equipment*, there is provision of Rs500,000. Can the hon. Minister state which type of machinery and equipment are involved?

Mr Bholah: Provision is made for the acquisition of IT equipment for additional staff that we are going to recruit.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on Sub-Head 10-102: Financial Services. We are on page 262, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, provision for Rs3,950,000, may we have the details of this figure?

Mr Bholah: This is provision made for the remuneration of chairperson and two members of the Review Panel set up under FIAMLA. Details are as follows –

- (i) Mr Joseph Gérard Angoh, Chairperson with remuneration of Rs167,355 monthly;
- (ii) Mr Noor-E-Shad Shaysiudhin Hussenee and Mr Harryram Ramsurn, Members, each drawing Rs38,100 monthly.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We move to page 263, hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultant – (Consultancy Services for Development of ESG Guidelines)*, je vois R 9 millions, R 6 millions, R 3 millions. Peut-on avoir le nom du consultant choisi?

Mr Bholah: Provision is made for consultancy services for development of Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) guidelines which will provide a framework for investors who will be using Mauritius to structure their... for funding of impactful projects in

Africa. Completion in 2024, duration of 6 months. The signature of grant agreement by the Ministry of Finance...

Not yet appointed, we are in process of appointment.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.922 – *Conferences/Seminars/Workshops*, may I ask the Minister how many seminars will be conducted in Rodrigues and under which themes?

Mr Bholah: We have provided for Conferences/Seminars/Workshops and expenses in connection with the following –

- (i) Economic Impact Assessment;
- (ii) Africa World Summit;
- (iii) workshop on Guideline for Sustainable Finance Framework for Africa;
- (iv) Mauritius-Africa Corridor Summit.

What will happen is that when we hold these seminars and conferences here, we will request stakeholders from Rodrigues as well to come and attend.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.152 – *Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd*, I can see that unlike last year, this year there is no provision made for any funding of a Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd, may I know why?

Mr Bholah: There has been a reclassification; you will note that it is on page 262, under Vote 10-101. There is a re-classification of this expenditure.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am coming to Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, concerning the director of Financial Services, may I know the salary package and the name of the incumbent?

Mr Bholah: Just tell me we are on page 263?

The Chairperson: Yes, page 263 still under Item 10-102 – Financial Services. And this is the last question.

Mr Bholah: No, but are we looking at Public Sector Governance, 103?

The Chairperson: What is your question, hon. Dr. Gungapersad?

Dr. Gungapersad: I repeat it. I am combining both 262 and 263. I am talking of the personal emoluments for the Director of the Financial Services.

Mr Bholah: We have to go back 262, is it?

Dr. Gungapersad: It is the same.

The Chairperson: Sorry?

Dr. Gungapersad: It is Item 102.

The Chairperson: Which page are you on hon. Dr. Gungapersad? We are on page 263.

Dr. Gungapersad: 262.

The Chairperson: No, 262 we have already gone. So now, we move page 263 Sub-Head 10-103 – Public Sector Governance Reforms.

Mr Bholah: Yes.

The Chairperson: Page 263. We have on Item 10-103. So, we are on page 264. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.018 – *Refund of Subscription Fees to Professional Bodies*. Can you list the Professional Bodies?

Mr Bholah: Provision has been made for annual subscription fee to professional bodies, mainly ACCM/ACME to officers who are required to be a registered member of these professional bodies.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Sub-Head 10-104 – Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism page 264. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26210.036 – *Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group*. May I know from the Minister when is the next review by ESAAMLG due?

Mr Bholah: 2027.

The Chairperson: 2027, thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees (a) Fees to Consultants - National Risk Assessment*. Can we know more about the consultant and the project?

Mr Bholah: Which one, (a), (b) or (c)?

Mr Abbas Mamode: (a)

Mr Bholah: It is World Bank.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 264 the same Item 22120 – *Fees (b) Fees to Consultants - Sector Risk Assessment*. We have earmarked Rs10 m. for that, who are the consultants for that?

Mr Bholah: Provision made for payment of fees to consultants for providing technical support with regard to FIAMLA risk. Not yet appointed.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Sub-Head 10-104, we are now on page 265. Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 10-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance (Rs305,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(2.27 p.m.)

Vote 11-1 Environment and Climate Change was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page...

The Chairperson: Sorry, one second please, hon. Bhagwan. So, we are now on Sub-Head 11-101 – General on page 273.

Mr Bhagwan: 273?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 273, Sub-Head 11-101 – General, Under Recurrent Expenditure, Item 20 – *Allowance to Minister*. We are being asked to vote for a sum of Rs2.4 m. I formerly moved that this amount be reduced by 50% being given that we all know the part-time job of the Minister.

The Chairperson: I will not...

Mr Bhagwan: Let me finish.

The Chairperson: I will not allow this because this Motion is not receivable under Standing Order 73 (7) which provides that –

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

Do you have another question?

Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 273, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know how will this amount be allocated to whom?

Mr Ramano: Yes, Mr Chairperson. So, the amount for Extra Assistance, this amount is provided for the payment of salaries, compensation and end of year bonus to 4 Advisers of the Minister. The list of Advisers is as follows –

- 1) Mr Prakash Kowlessur, Senior Adviser on Environmental and Solidwaste Matters and Mr Prakash Kowlessur has been employed on contract as Senior Adviser on environmental and solid waste matters for a period of 1 year with effect from 20 September 2021. His contract has been annually renewed with effect from 20 September 2022 till date on the same terms and condition. Mr Kowlessur is drawing a monthly salary of Rs94,500 plus travelling allowance and he was formerly the Director of the Solid Waste Management Division and he retired on 23 July 2021. He holds a MSc in Environmental Health from the University of Surrey.
- 2) Mrs Marie Benjamine Christelle Chumroo, Adviser on Information matters. Mrs Marie Benjamine Christelle Chumroo was employed on contract as Adviser on information matters with effect from 02 February 2021 for a period of 1 year and her contract has been renewed for a further period of 1 year with effect from 02 February 2022 on the same terms and condition. She is drawing a monthly salary of Rs66,200 plus car and travelling allowance in accordance with PRB report 2021. She holds a BSc.
- 3) Mrs Sarita Rambha Ramkalawon, Adviser on public relations matters and she has been employed on contract as Adviser on public relation matters with effect from 20 May 2021 for a period of 1 year. She is drawing a salary of Rs25,525 plus allowance for working regularly beyond normal working hours during weekdays, weekends and so on.
- 4) Mr Gilbert Clyde Bastienne, Adviser on landscaping matters. Mr Gilbert Clyde Bastienne has been employed on contract as Adviser on landscaping matters for a period of 1 year with effect from 08 November 2021. His contract has been renewed annually on the same terms and condition and his salary is Rs30,700.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, for an amount of Rs1,350,000, may we have some more details?

The Chairperson: We are on page 274 hon. Doolub. One second, so hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: 274?

The Chairperson: 274, yes.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*. Can we know if it is in-house or if there is a service provider? The name of the service provider?

Mr Ramano: We have an increase in yearly contract price. Provision made for cleaning of toilets and sanitary services at the Ministry and Police de L'Environment at Ken Lee Tower, the National Environment Laboratory at Réduit and sub offices of Living Environment Unit at Bois Marchand and Bell Village and following a tender exercise, a one year contract with the effect from the 01 May 2024 was awarded to company Silver Clean Company Ltd for the sum of Rs600,000 annually.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over. We know move on to Sub-Head 11-102: Environmental Protection, Conservation and Monitoring. We are on page 274. On page 275, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (Grant Funded) (c) Institutional Strengthening-Ozone Layer Protection*. There is an increase in the budget for saying; can the hon. Minister inform the House?

Mr Ramano: The Status of the project is 180,000 USD by the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund. The proposed implementation –

- (i) production of resource materials for different target groups in August 2024,
- (ii) organisation of activities to mark the International Day for the Ozone Day 2024 in September 2024,

- (iii) training custom officers in November 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31132.112 – *Consumer Information Systems for Sustainable Consumption and Production – ECONO-Biz, Promoting Eco-Friendly Practices in Enterprises.* There is no amount allocated for the next financial year, may we know why and can we have more details about this project?

Mr Ramano: No funds were provided under this budget for this project as the capacity building and sensitisation of stakeholders including enterprises for the integration of circular economy practices will henceforth be carried out through the implementation of the roadmap and action plan for a circular economy in the Republic of Mauritius for 2023-2033. So, funds to the tune of Rs1 m. has been allocated for this purpose under this Budget 2024-2025 under the Climate and Sustainability Funds PSIP Code D0324.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.903 – *Awareness Campaign*, an amount of Rs2 m. is being earmarked. May we have more details from the Minister with regard to this awareness campaign?

Mr Ramano: For this project, the activity is to mark the Earth Day 2024 and the World Environment Day 2024 and to produce resource material such as booklets, roller banners and posters as well as radio and TV spots on environmental issues and to conduct awareness raising activities with the youth, women and senior citizens, NGOs and other target groups. The proposed disbursement schedule is as follows –

- (i) Earth Day and a World Environment Day: 50% by June 2025;
- (ii) Production and airing of Radio, TV spot: 30% by June 2025;
- (iii) Production of resource materials: 10% by March 2025, and
- (iv) Press communiqué: 10% by June 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22060 – *Maintenance*. Can the hon. Minister elaborate and inform the House whether there is a private service provider?

Mr Ramano: For this amount there has been an increase due to increased activities. Provision for maintenance of building, National environment laboratory, and plant and equipment such as photocopying machine, computer, fax machine et cetera. Also, maintenance of building which is for Rs1 m.; plant and equipment: Rs4,100,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to Sub-Head 11-103: Climate Change Resilience, Graining and Embellishment, page 276. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22090 – *Security*, can we know why we are increasing the budget for security purposes?

Mr Ramano: The increase is due to yearly contract price. Provision for security services for the sites of –

- (i) Dauguet, SSR Memorial Park;
- (ii) Signal Mountain;
- (iii) Petit Sable Beach;
- (iv) NEL Reduit;
- (v) LEU Bell Village and Mahebourg, and
- (vi) Air monitoring stations.

And following a tender exercise, a one year contract with effect from 01 May 2024 was awarded to Quick Security Guards Ltd for the total sum of Rs6,081,660.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120.007 – *Fees for Training (Grant Funded) (d) Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency*. May I know from the hon. Minister, what this training is about and who is the consultant who will provide this training?

Mr Ramano: The objective itself is for Mauritius to improve the quality of the National Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory and its processes for reporting and transparency in order to provide a firmer basis for evidence-based policy-making. For Financial Year 2023-2024, few planned activities could not be undertaken due to delays in hiring consultancy firms. Due to delays in hiring consultancy firms, capacity building workshops have also been delayed and the amount remaining for financial year has been shifted to Financial Year 2024-2025. So, for Financial Year 2024-2025, the amount voted would be used for capacity building workshops on gender mainstreaming, in mitigation actions, country specific emission factors, intergovernmental panel on climate change, methodologies and software and validation workshops for reports.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded) (c) Needs Assessment for Implementation of Climate Change Act 2020*. There is no amount allocated for the next financial year. Can we know the reason and may we know the status for this project? Et est-ce qu'on doit comprendre que le *Climate Change Act* n'est toujours pas implémenté ?

Mr Ramano: One minute, please.

The Chairperson: We move to a next question in the meantime that the answer comes. So, hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded) (f) Coastal Risk Assessment Study*, can we know who the consultant for this study is please?

Mr Ramano: Yes, avec votre permission, M. le président, je souhaite tout simplement réagir pour la question précédente pour dire que le projet a été complété.

The Chairperson: Le projet a été ...?

Mr Ramano: Le projet a été complété.

The Chairperson: Complété, d'accord.

Mr Ramano: Ce qui explique le fait qu'il y a une somme qui a été *earmarked* pour les années suivantes.

The Chairperson: D'accord, merci.

Mr Ramano: *Donc, pour la présente question, M. le président, le but c'est* to conduct an in-depth study on risks related to the hazards, namely coastal erosion and marine submersion on mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues for crisis management. And during the Financial Year 2023-2024, funds were not used as the project officer could not be recruited. Well, during Financial Year 2024-2025, the sum of Rs700,000 will be used for translation of reports under the project itself.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*. There is a rise of Rs2 m; the name of service providers?

Mr Ramano: For Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, provision made for cleaning services of toilets and sanitary services at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Memorial Park, Kewal Nagar, Le Dauguet Promenade de Santé and Tranquebar. Contract was awarded to Silver Clean Ltd following a tender exercise, a one year contract with effect from 1 May 2024. And the contract was awarded to Silver Clean Company Ltd for the sum of Rs389,460 yearly.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22090 – *Security*, I notice an increase of Rs2,100,000 for this Item. May we have more details?

The Chairperson: Has already been canvassed! Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120.007 – *Fees for Training (Grant Funded) (c) Fourth National Communication*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why there is such an increase in the amount allocated for this year?

Mr Ramano: For the Financial Year 2023-2024, the planned activities could not be undertaken as the National Project Coordinator is not yet in post. The amount voted has been

shifted for Financial Year 2024-2025 and amount voted would be used for inception workshop to kick-start the implementation of the project and also for capacity building on Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Mitigation and Vulnerability Assessment.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 276, Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded) (b) Fourth National Communication*, we find a steady increase in the sum allocated for that: Rs687,000 then it comes to Rs1.6 m. then it goes on to Rs4.3 m.

Mr Ramano: I think it has just been replied, Mr Chairperson, because I have just replied that for Financial Year 2023-2024, the planned activities could not be undertaken as the National Project Coordinator is not yet in post and the amount has been shifted to Financial Year 2024-2025. And for Financial Year 2024-2025, amount voted would be used for inception workshop to kick-start the implementation of the project and capacity building on Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory Mitigation and Vulnerability Assessment.

The Chairperson: I think the hon. Member was referring to section (b) *Fourth National Communication*. Is that right?

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Regarding the Item I just highlighted before, my question to the Minister was to give the name of the consultant and he did not reply.

Mr Ramano: Okay, if you can bear with me for some seconds.

The Chairperson: In the meantime we move to page 277. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (Grant Funded) (e) Coastal Risk Assessment Study*, can we know from the hon. Minister how the amount will be disbursed for the Coastal Risk Assessment Study?

Mr Ramano: In the meantime, Mr Chairperson, I can reply for hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha. The company is BRGM from France and Réunion.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Ramano: So, the objective for this sum which has been earmarked is to conduct an in-depth study on risks related to the two hazards, namely coastal erosion and marine submersion on mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues for crisis management. The justification is that during the Financial Year 2022-2023 funds were used as follows –

- For the preparation and validation of Phase 1 report;
- Status on coastal erosion and marine submersion;
- During Financial Year 2024-2025, funds earmarked will be used as fees to experts;
- For preparation of Phase 2 report;
- Complementary study on modeling and preparation of risk maps, and
- Development of capacity building programme.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Last question, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31112.001 – *Construction of Office Buildings*, may we know the status of this project and where the new office building is located?

Mr Ramano: Normally, there has been a decrease because provision made for the implementation of electrical and other finishing works at Bois Marchand sub-office and Mahebourg sub-office. The works are completed now. Concerning upgrading of office buildings, there has been an increase for Financial Year 2024-2025 which will be used to kick-start the resurfacing of yard of Rose-Hill LEU sub office and upgrading of Bell Village LEU sub office whereby leakage of water from the ceilings has been noted.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister!

Vote 11-1 Environment and Climate Change (Rs475,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(2.51 p.m.)

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management was called.

The Chairperson: We are now on page 280. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: *Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070.001 – Public Beaches,* est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire l'effectif de ce *Public Beaches*, l'équipe qui fait le nettoyage combien de personnes sont impliquées ? Parce que je vois que quand même, R 170 millions, R 180 millions et R 185 millions par an.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Ramano: Yes, one minute please.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we take a question from hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070.009 – *Collection and Export of e-wastes.* Can we know from the hon. Minister why the budget has been reduced for the collection and export of e-wastes?

Mr Ramano: The decrease in provision is due to delay in the appointment of a new contractor for the transportation and recycling of e-wastes which are stored at Khoyratty.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, can the hon. Minister table the list of all contractors and amount paid to them for year 2023-2024?

Mr Ramano: Oui, M. le président. Donc, il y a plusieurs plages qui sont directement concernées. Ce sera avec plaisir qu'on va soumettre la liste des contracteurs et aussi les différents montants qui ont été payés pour les années en cours. Et bien sûr, vous aurez tous les détails en ce qui concerne le *scope of works* aussi.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon...

Mr Assirvaden: Le ministre n'a pas répondu à ma question pour l'*Item 22070.001 – Public Beaches* concernant l'effectif de...

The Chairperson: Public beaches!

Mr Assirvaden: Combien de personnes sont impliquées dans le nettoyage des plages ?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il y a plusieurs compagnies privées qui sont concernées. Par exemple, il y a –

- *contract for beach cleaning ;*
- *refuse, collection and maintenance of toilet blocks, and*
- *provision of watchmanship services on main beaches.*

Cela ce sont les *main beaches*. Nous avons quatres lots –

- MB Lot 1 ;
- MB Lot 2 ;
- MB Lot 3 ; et
- MB Lot 4.

Il y a quatre compagnies qui sont concernées : Maxiclean, Mauriclean Ltd – deux fois Mauriclean – et Atics Ltd.

Donc, je n'ai pas les détails en ce qui concerne le *workforce*, mais c'est quelque chose que je peux éventuellement soumettre, M. le président.

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

Ms J. Bérenger: *Item 22070.003 – Operation of Landfill Sites*, peut-on savoir où en est le contrat du gestionnaire du site de Mare Chicose qui est expiré depuis années si je ne me trompe, et si la somme allouée inclut aussi le nouveau contrat de R 70 millions qui vient d'être alloué à Sotravic et Enetotech pour créer des nouveaux espaces vides ?

Mr Ramano: Oui, un moment s'il-vous plaît.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same Item 22070.004 – *Operation & Maintenance of Transfer Stations*, can the Minister inform the House the name of service providers?

Mr Ramano: *En ce qui concerne –*

- (i) La Chaumière, contract has been awarded to Sotravic Ltd ;
- (ii) Roche Bois, contract awarded to GV Square Deal Multipurpose Cooperative Society Limited, Serveng Ltd;
- (iii) Poudre d'Or, contract awarded to Maxiclean Co Ltd;
- (iv) La Laura, contract awarded to *Compagnie Régionale de Services et de l'Environnement* for a period of 36 months, and
- (v) La Brasserie, contract has been awarded to Sotravic for 36 months period, starting on 16 November 2022 and ending 15 November 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22070.009 – *Collection and Export of e-wastes*, may I know from the hon. Minister the amount of e-wastes collected and to which country are these e-wastes exported?

Mr Ramano: The country to which the e-wastes have been exported, I will have the answer in a minute. The contract was awarded to Neel Trading & Facilities Ltd as from February 2019. However, since 01 June 2021, contract is for storage of e-wastes collected previously. So, I will have the answer concerning the country to which...

The Chairperson: Yes, I know. We are waiting for your answer as well, hon. Ms J. Bérenger. In the meantime, we have a question from hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: It is on page 281.

The Chairperson: Yes, we are coming to that.

Mr Ramano: If I can give the answer concerning the country, the country is South Africa. And concerning the previous answer which has not been answered, the allocated sum includes payment of operation of landfill for the month of May and June 2023 in the amount of Rs70 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you. On page 281, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys, Implementing Sustainable Low and NonChemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS)*, will the survey be nationwide where Rodrigues and Agalega will be involved?

Mr Ramano: Yes, provision for consultant services for the conduct of a comprehensive inventory of hazardous wastes in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.003 – *Extra Budgetary Units, Beach Authority*, can we know from the hon. Minister how the sum of Rs70 m. will be disbursed by the Beach Authority?

Mr Ramano: The provision is to meet the major part of administrative costs of the Beach Authority which includes salaries, allowances, cost of utilities, rent, maintenance etc, and we have also legal and professional charges. This concerns mainly the administrative part, *M. le président*.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, Grants, Item 26313.003 – *Extra Budgetary Units, Beach Authority*, there is a huge increase from Rs6.5 m. to Rs10 m. Can we know the reason why this increase?

Mr Ramano: The increase in expenditure is based on actual value and number of projects approved the Capital Grant. That is the answer that I have.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 26313.003 – *Extra Budgetary Units, Beach Authority*, can the hon. Minister tell us the name of the Director of the Beach Authority and the pay package?

Mr Ramano: The name of the Director is Mr Sudeven Chengebroyen and the pay package for the General Manager is Rs110,120.

Mr Juman: Qualifications?

The Chairperson: I beg your pardon?

Mr Juman: Qualifications?

Mr Ramano: He has a MBA.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Last question from hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Item 31122.999 – Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment*, il y a une nette augmentation de R 100 000 à R 1 million. Peut-on savoir si ce budget a prévu l'acquisition de *compost bins* et si ce sont ces *compost bins* qui ont été achetés qui sont en train d'être distribués dans circonscription du ministre concerné ?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, c'est toujours la même rengaine. Donc, c'est *provision for the purchase of heavy duty photocopy machine*. Donc, il n'y a pas de *photocopy machines* qui sont distribuées actuellement, M. le président.

Donc, c'est heavy duty photocopy machine and a digital videoconferencing system to be operational at new office premises in Ebene. So, the procurement exercise will be initiated in July 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management (Rs857,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.03 p.m.)

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was called.

The Chairperson: We are going to proceed by Sub-Heads. We are at Sub-Head 12-101: General, on page 287.

Page 288, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. On top of the page, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know the names of the beneficiaries and the amount paid to them?

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I was expecting that question. So, there are three Advisers that are attached to the Ministry –

- one Adviser on Information Matters;
- one Adviser on Public Relation Matters, and

- one Technical Adviser.

They are –

- Mr Choonea
- Mr Appayah, and
- Ms Ori respectively.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*, we have noticed that there has been an increase from Rs1 m. to Rs6 m. Can we have some light on it?

Mr Seeruttun: Can you repeat the Item number please?

Mr Woochit: Item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*.

Mr Seeruttun: There is an increase which is the result of a MoU signed with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for Rs5 m. for the dissemination and sensitisation of all the schemes and services that have been provided by the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Moving on to Sub-Head 12-102: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector, page 289, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.028 – *Irrigation Authority*, I can see there is a one-off budget amount for (a) *Supporting Climate Smart Agriculture for smallholders (EU funded)*. There is no budget for the forthcoming year. Can we know why? Was it a one-off project?

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. This project is now completed. It was an EU funded project which is now over.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 26323.028 – *Irrigation Authority*, the name of the Director, qualification and pay package.

Mr Seeruttun: The name of the Director is one Mr Seetah and I do not have the details of his qualifications but I can circulate that.

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

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 28225.014 – *Cane Replantation Scheme*, may I know from the hon. Minister from last year the amount that has been disbursed and the number of beneficiaries under that Scheme?

Mr Seeruttun: I am informed that for last year, that is, year 2023-2024, 436.74 hectares of land have been replanted and some 1,250 arpents have been earmarked to be replanted under the scheme for the forthcoming year.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26323.028 – *Irrigation Authority, (e) Drip Irrigation System, ii. Irrigation System i.c.w Biomass Framework*, there is a decrease in the amount allocated. Can we know the reason please?

Mr Seeruttun: The reason is that the project already started last year and most of the work has been completed in those areas identified. So, for this year, we have the completion of the project. That is why the amount has been decreased to Rs4 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem, I think...

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I think the hon. Minister did reply to my question. My question was how much out of the Rs75 m. has been spent last year and how many beneficiaries have obtained funding under that scheme.

Mr Seeruttun: Alright, in terms of the number of beneficiaries, well, I do not think I have the number of beneficiaries but like I said, the amount covered was 436 hectares of land. As at 21 May, 643 planters have already benefitted from the scheme.

The Chairperson: Thank you, we are now moving to Sub-Head 12-103: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector. Page 289, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130.011 – *Sustainable Low and non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) project (Study)*, can the hon. Minister explain why...

The Chairperson: Can you repeat which section you are talking about? We are on page 289, Sub-Head 12-103.

Mr Léopold: It is 290.

The Chairperson: Okay, page 290, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services of which Green Agricultural Certification / Certification of Fresh Agricultural Produce (Mauritius Standard Bureau)*, peut-on savoir combien de certificats on été délivrés, s'il-vous plaît ?

Mr Seeruttun: Till date, I am informed that there are 72 agricultural operators who have successfully certified under this scheme, 72.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Item 25210.017 – *Scheme to Encourage Use of Bio Fertilizers (including zero-based natural farming)*, there has been a decrease from Rs10 m. to Rs8 m. Can we know why the decrease?

Mr Seeruttun: I informed that this is a demand driven scheme. So, based on the number of demands that are received, that is why, we have catered for that amount.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22090 – *Security*, may I know from the hon. Minister the name of the contractor who has won the contract and whether that contractor has had his contract terminated previously?

Mr Seeruttun: The current contract has already been expired and there is an exercise that is on-going at the moment and it is being evaluated at this stage. So, we are awaiting the conclusion of that exercise to award a contract. So, we have to wait.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 25210.012 – *Seed Purchase Scheme*. I know an increase of Rs10 m. for this Item; may we know the reasons thereof from the Minister? Thank you.

Mr Seeruttun: May I ask just you again to repeat the Item number please.

Mr Doolub: Item 25210.012 – *Seed Purchase Scheme*.

Mr Seeruttun: This is a new budgetary measure that was announced in the budget and where growers that are going to grow potatoes, onion, garlic and bean seeds will be entitled to a

75% subsidy on the purchase of the seeds from the agricultural marketing board. So, we have those who are going to purchase those seeds who will be allowed a subsidy.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 291. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you. *Item 26229.019 – Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) (a) Specialised Bio-Farm Unit.* Again, there has been a significant decrease from Rs20 m. to Rs10 m., can we know why this bio farm unit has been decreased?

Mr Seeruttun: The decrease is for the construction of a Bio Farm Unit and last year there was Rs20 m. catered for that particular project and Rs10 m. for this year. The project is nearly completed now. So, this is the last instalment that would need to be catered for in this year to pay for that particular project.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 292 under the same Item, last question from, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: *Item 31112.422 – Setting up of Cold Storage Facilities at the National Wholesale Market.* Can we know the status of the project and the duration for the construction?

Mr Seeruttun: For the storage facility that we have catered for in this particular Financial Year. It is a project which needs to be started but I see an amount of money has been projected for the next 3 years. So, hopefully once all the process is started, we will know as soon as we have appointed one contractor, how long it is going to take to have it installed.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to Sub-Head 12-104 – Livestock Production and Development, we are on page 292. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 292, *Item 21110.005 – Extra Assistance*, Rs5 m. May we have details regarding same?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes. Rs5 m. has been provided to recruit veterinarian officers from SADC member countries and from elsewhere because we have a shortage of vet officers in this country. That's why we are having recourse to recruit from overseas and that amount of money has been provided for that particular expenditure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman! Page 292.

Mr Juman: 292/293 same Item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman. Okay. Page 293.

Mr Juman: Item 25110.003 – *Mauritius Meat Authority (MMA)*. Can I know from the hon. Minister, the number of personnel attached to the Mauritius Meat Authority on a full-time basis and the number of personnel which is on relief?

Mr Seeruttun: If you go to the last pages of this Ministry, you will see that we have under the Livestock Sector Production. I can see we have 280 officers that are posted under the livestock production and development sector. If you are going to ask me exactly for the MMA I don't have it right now but I can of course provide you with that information.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Minister. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*. Does this include the survey which supposedly had been done for the population of the Long-Tailed Macaque?

Mr Seeruttun: Say it again.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que ce montant alloué pour la dernière année financière inclut le montant pour le *Survey* qui supposément a été fait pour estimer la quantité de *Long-Tailed Macaque* à Maurice?

Mr Seeruttun: Je ne crois pas.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Seeruttun: If I may, Mr Chairperson, just to bounce back on the question with regard to the number of employees at the MMA. I am informed that there are 175 employees at the MMA and about 69 casual workers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26210.220 – *Surveillance Épidémiologique et Gestion des Alertes (SEGA) One Health Fund*. Can the Minister give more details on that and whether it is nationwide and what types of diseases are we going to assess?

Mr Seeruttun: This provision is made for the payment of the Membership fees to the Indian Ocean Commission for the *Surveillance Épidémiologique et Gestion des Alertes (SEGA) One Health Fund*. So, of course this allows us to have the services on health surveillance and also to strengthen capacity building and all that.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 294, hon. Assirvaden! Under Sub-Head 12-104 – Livestock Production and Development.

Mr Assirvaden: The first one I mean. Okay? Page 294.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Assirvaden: Item 31113.047 – *Construction of Dog Shelter*. Je vois R 5 millions sont prevues. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire, ou on va construire ce *dog shelter*?

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, ça été annoncé dans le discours du budget. C'est un nouveau projet et l'endroit identifié est Plaine Magnien.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bhagwan! Last question.

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31112.401 – *Refurbishment of Riche Lieu Quarantine Centre*. On nous demande de voter R 15 millions. Can we have some details whether; it will be a new centre or old one which will be refurbished?

Mr Seeruttun: There is already an old quarantine centre there. So, the idea is to relook completely the whole setup that we have and to have a new one built there, because we have the land available there.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on Sub-Head 12-105 – Forests, page 294. Page 295, Sub-Head 12-106 – National Parks and Conservation Service. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under Item 22090 – *Security*. May we know who has been awarded the contract to provide security services?

Mr Seeruttun: So, again I am informed that the new tender launched recently and bids have been received, about 9 bidders and it's being assessed at the moment. So, as soon as the successful bidder is selected, it's going to be awarded.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Je ne suis pas sûr sous quel item je dois le prendre, je vais prendre sous item 22110 - *Personal Emoluments*, peut-on savoir combien de *way leave* ont été délivrés par le National Parks and Conservation Service pour l'abattage d'arbres endémiques ?

Mr Seeruttun: Way leave, you mean?

Ms J. Bérenger: Oui, *clearance*, *way leave*. Il faut la permission du *National Parks* pour le faire.

Mr Seeruttun: In terms of felling of trees, it's at the level of the Forestry Department and not at the level of the National Parks and Conservation Service who gives the permit. It's the Conservator of Forest who awards the permit for felling of trees.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! We are now on page 296.

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Rs2,725,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.25 p.m.)

(Attorney-General's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade)

Vote 13-1: Office of the Solicitor-General was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Léopold! We are now on page 306.

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.011 - *Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, can you give a breakdown of fees payable to Privy Council?

Mr Gobin: We have a number of cases. I can list the cases. I prefer to circulate it. It's too long.

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

Mr Uteem: On the same item *22120.011 - Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, may we have a list of the lawyers who have represented the State of Mauritius before the Privy Council and if you have a criteria for selection of those law firms?

Mr Gobin: I will have to circulate it, Mr Chairperson, because of the length.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! We are now on page 307. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item *22120.032 - Fees for Legal Outsourcing*, can I have from the hon. Minister the list of service providers and also the amount paid to them?

Mr Gobin: It is on a case to case basis, Mr Chairperson. I can circulate. It's fairly long.

Mr Juman: Please table it!

The Chairperson: Yes, thank you, hon. Juman. Hon. Minister is going to table it.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item *28216.012 - Contribution for Operation of Mauritius International Arbitration Centre (MIAC)*, every year I ask the same question, we budget Rs12 m. to contribute to MIAC, so may I know from the hon. Attorney General how many cases have been referred to and determined by MIAC in the years that just went back?

Mr Gobin: Yes, I was expecting that. So, for Financial Year 2023-2024, I am informed that MIAC staff members have acted and provided assistance to 4 appointing authority and 23 registry matters, including 4 matters under the MIAC Arbitration Rules and 1 matter for which meeting and hearing were hosted by MIAC. In so far as the other activities of training, participation in overseas events, conferences, it's fairly long list of activities, I better circulate.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister!

Vote 13-1 Office of the Solicitor-General (Rs320,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.29 p.m.)

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 310, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under item 22120.012 - *Retainer Fees to Counsel*, may we have the names of the Counsel whose services have been retained?

Mr Gobin: If I am not mistaken, that would be the prosecuting counsel locally. So, it would be case to case basis, that's a fairly long list. As you know, members of the Bar apply for prosecuting authority, I am informed that there are 8 prosecuting counsel. I can circulate this list.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Page 310, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, can I know from the hon. Minister the number of officers suspended?

Mr Gobin: I would not have that now unfortunately.

The Chairperson: If you can, please table the information later. Hon. Osman Mahomed on page 311!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 22900.813 - *Expenses icw National Action Plan to combat trafficking in person*, Rs2 billion over the next three years, can I ask the hon. Minister what is the difference because in police service, there is an exactly the same line item 22900.813 on page 88, yesterday we voted for but higher amount Rs5 m., what is the connection between the two?

Mr Gobin: The activities for this trafficking in person for our Office of the DPP is for training of our prosecutors under 2 programmes –

- One with the UNODC;
- One with the European Union.

I can table that.

Mr Osman Mahomed: What is the difference?

Mr Gobin: The difference is the police, they are enquiring officers, and the prosecutors need to be trained as well.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item *31122.802 - Acquisition of IT Equipment (a) Online Project for Provision of Briefs to Counsels*, may I know from the hon. Attorney General what this project is about and whether the contract has been awarded already?

Mr Gobin: Contract awarded to Mauritius Network Services Limited. Contract value Rs4,031,645.82, including VAT. 20% will be paid after successful completion of operational acceptance for end to end system after 2 months of going live.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad! May I ask members to directly address the Chair?

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Page 311, Item *31122.802 – (b) Enhancement of the Certificate of Character Online Application*. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether this has already been taken care of because it takes time to have Character Certificate?

Mr Gobin: It has been completed. This is a completed project, now the Certificate of Character is provided electronically with a QR code.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Rs191,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.34 p.m.)

Vote 13-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (Rs24,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.34 p.m.)

Vote 13-4 Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 320 Sub-Head 13-401 – General. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 320, Item 21110.005 – *Extra assistance*. Can we have some details?

Mr Gobin: Extra assistance is for payment of salaries and allowances to Advisers, I have

3 –

- 1) Mr Akilesh Roopun;
- 2) Mr Avneesh Ramhota; and
- 3) Mr Soondur.

That's it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 22020.

The Chairperson: On page 321, yes?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 22030- *Rent*

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, we are still under Sub-Head 13-401 – General. So, we now move on to Sub-Head 13-402 – Foreign Relations and Regional Integration, page 321. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22030 – Rent, we are invited to vote for an amount of Rs240 m., can we have more details on that increase?

Mr Gobin: This is for provision for rental at Newton Tower, Fooks house and we also have rental of chanceries and staff residential for our missions abroad. We also have rental of parking slots in Port Louis at Newton Tower and why the increase I would assume market price. For Fooks House, it's Société Fooks. For Newton tower, it is Belem Ltd and for rental of our buildings and chanceries for missions abroad. There are in all 21 of them, quite long.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Same Item. Can the Minister circulate the list?

Mr Gobin: Alright.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 21110.001 – *Basic salary*. We are asked to vote Rs190 m. for ambassadors and other diplomats, may I know from the hon. Minister, out of the 25 ambassadors in our foreign mission. How many are career diplomats and how many are political employments.

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Minister, you can table the information at a later stage. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 321, Item 22190 – *Overseas Travel - Staff posted in Embassies*. May we have some details? The Minister may table the list later. For Rs15 m.

Mr Gobin: The provision is made for payment of subsistence *per diem* allowance to ambassadors and home-based staff proceeding on official missions abroad and to accredited countries. The increase in provision is based on a trend of expenditure and fluctuation in exchange rate. Of course, it is a long list; I can circulate at a late stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Page 322, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Item 26210.058 – *SADC and Affiliated Institutions*. May we know what are the affiliated institutions and why there is an increase in grant?

Mr Gobin: Yes, it is huge increase in fact. It is because of the contribution we have to make to the SADC and particularly to the SADC standby force mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), the extended mandate for July 2023 to July 2024 and the assess contribution stand by force mission in the Democratic republic of Congo for period July 2023- July 2024. I wish to inform the House that Mauritius has joined the SADC mutual defence pact way back in 2003 but recently with the two stand-by missions in Mozambique and SADC, we see a huge increase in our contribution.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *Item 31121.801 – Acquisition of Vehicles.* Rs8.1 m., can we have some details on the number of vehicles that are contemplated to be purchased?

Mr Gobin: Provision is made for replacement of 3 cars in our missions in London, New York and Paris.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Assirvaden! Last question on this Item.

Mr Assirvaden: 322?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Assirvaden: À l'Item 3112.408 – *Upgrading of Chanceries, Ambassador's and/or Staff Residence.* Un montant total de R 113 millions est voté. Je voudrais savoir si quand la rénovation va se faire, les ambassadeurs vont être logés à l'hôtel où ils vont être logés dans leur résidence?

The Chairperson: I believe this is a question of policy and administration and we are not going to entertain.

Mr Gobin: I think that is a fit question for a PQ.

The Chairperson: Time over. We are now at Sub-Head 13-403 – International Trade, page 323. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants - Geographical Indication applications for targeted sectors (EU Funded).* Le montant a été augmenté à 100 %, R 5 millions à R 10 millions. Peut-on avoir les détails sur les dépenses encourues.

Mr Gobin: We are talking of the?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Fees to Consultants.

Mr Gobin: Geographical Indication applications for targeted sectors (EU Funded, yes?)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes.

Mr Gobin: This is for capacity building and....

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Peut-on avoir les détails sur les dépenses encourus s'il vous plait ?

Mr Gobin: This is for capacity building and assistance in processing geographical indication applications through targeted sectors as it is set out there. It is an EU funded project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*. Can we have the name of the service providers?

Mr Gobin: This is for the cleaning of office premises at Medine Mews Building Port-Louis and Sterling House Building Port-Louis. For Medine Mews, the service provider for cleaning is Mauriclean Ltd; the contract was renewed on 01 January of this year. For Medine Mews, we also have a service provider for pest control, namely Pestmasters Services Ltd., a contract that was awarded on 27 September 2023, and it is still a running contract. For the office at Sterling House Building, we have a contract for cleaning services awarded to Sotraclean Ltd, and the contract was awarded on 01 October 2023 for a period of 1 year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22900.014 –*Hospitality and Ceremonies*. Last year, it was Rs1 m., this year Rs1.5 m. and then it goes back to Rs1m. So, why the increase only for the current year?

Mr Gobin: Provision made to meet the expenses in connection with conferences, seminars and workshops. Increase is made for the upcoming workshops during financial year 2024-2025. I list them, there are 7 –

1. World Trade Organisation National Workshop;
2. Meeting of the High Power Joint Trade Committee on SECPA with India;
3. The Fifth Round of Mauritius-Indonesia PTA negotiations;
4. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA);
5. The EPA Rounds of negotiations;

6. Signing Ceremony Mauritius-UAE-SECPA;
7. The National Workshops pertaining to Geographical Indication.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 21110.001 – *Basic Salary*. Can I ask the hon. Minister who is the Director and Deputy Direct of the Trade Policy Unit, please?

Mr Gobin: The Director retired yesterday. The Deputy Director is Mr Luximon.

Vote 13-4: Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs1,925,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(3.47 p.m.)

Vote 13-5 Human Rights Division was called.

The Chairperson: Page 307. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22900.932 – *Other Goods and Services – Human Rights Awareness*. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the awareness? Is there a campaign and who does the campaign?

Mr Gobin: Activities organised here were in the context of Human Rights Day to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to commemorate Human Rights Day 2023. We have also produced human rights calendars for distribution to sensitise on articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the calendar was distributed to all ministries/departments, Municipal/District Councils as well as the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Workshops in collaboration with the Institute of Judicial and Legal Services were held in December last year, once again, on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also includes capacity-building programmes for the staff.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 13-5 Human Rights Division (Rs28,600,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(3.49 p.m.)

Vote 14-1 Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation was called.

The Chairperson: We at page 334, Sub-Head 14-101: General. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*. Can we have some details with regard to this Item, please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes. This is provision for payment of acting, responsibility ad-hoc duty allowances to officers.

The Chairperson: Page 335. Hon. Ms. Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22120 – *Fees*. May we know from the hon. Minister to whom the fees are paid?

Mr Toussaint: Yes. Payment of fees is to Chairperson and Board Members of Bid Evaluation Committee and Departmental Bid Committee.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 22030 – *Rent*. I noticed there is a decrease from Rs17 m. to Rs15.8 m. Can we know the reason of this decrease?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the decrease is due to the optimisation of offices based at headquarters and the relocation of some of our services, like the National Youth Council, the Mauritius Recreation Council and Team Mauritius, which have been relocated in our buildings.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now at page 335, Sub-Head 14-102: Promotion and Development of Sports. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Item 22090 – *Security*. There is an increase from Rs11 m. to Rs20 m. Can we know the reason for such an increase and to whom contracts have been awarded please?

Mr Toussaint: It is due to the application of eventually the minimum wage to take into consideration the prevailing labour legislation, and for the moment we do not have a service provider because bidding exercises are ongoing.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, an amount of Rs11,700,000, can we have some details about this?

Mr Toussaint: Yes. This is for the payment to Advisers –

- Mr Fabien Hector, Adviser on Information Matters, Rs69,600;
- Mr Khemraz Naiko, Adviser in Athletics, Rs54,300;
- Mr Jean Pierre R. Sauzier, Adviser in Sports Matters, Rs52,900;
- Mr Achley Mocudé, Adviser in Sports Matters, Rs42,750;
- Mr Nirmal Rewa, Adviser in Football, Rs42,750;
- Mr Éric Milazar, Adviser Coach in Athletics, Rs42,750;
- Mr C. Dorasami, Adviser Coach in Football, Rs42,750;
- Mr Jooron Dhunraj, Adviser in Martial Art, Rs42,750;
- Mr Hung Mario, Adviser in Martial Art, Rs42,750;
- Mr Ramasawmi Rakesh, Adviser in Kite Surfing and Yachting, Rs42,750;
- Mr David Mallié, Adviser Coach in Handball, Rs27,350;
- Mr Lemontagnard Julien, Adviser in Kite Surfing and Yachting, Rs27,350;
- Mr Meemeea Ignace, Adviser in Tae Kwon Do, Rs25,625;
- Mr Pettrapermal Noganade, Adviser Coach in Judo, Rs25,250;
- Mrs Durhonne Marie-Michèle, Adviser Coach in Judo, Rs25,250;
- Mr Sunee Richard Franco, Adviser Coach in Boxing, Rs25,250;

- Mr Collet Jacques, Adviser Coach in Judo, Rs25,250, and
- Mr Lebon Josian, Adviser Coach in Boxing, Rs25,250.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 336. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le president. Item *31113.406 – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (c) Glen Park Multisports Complex*, peut-on obtenir du ministre les détails sur les travaux qui seront entrepris au complexe sportif de Glen Park, s'il vous plait ? Merci.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, are we on page 336?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Toussaint: I cannot find this on page 336. We are on page 336.

The Chairperson: À la page 336. Which Item are you referring to, hon. Ms Anquetil?

Ms Anquetil: Item *31113. 406*.

The Chairperson: We are going to come to page 337 in a minute. Hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: Item *26313.045 – Mauritius Sports Council*, can we know the composition of this Council, the members and their remuneration, please?

Mr Toussaint: The name of the Chairperson and Board members –

- Chairperson, Mrs Sarah Rawat Currimjee, board/fee allowance, Rs35,000;
- Mr Azhar Mamoojee, Officer of the Ministry;
- Mrs B. R. Saddul, representative of the Ministry of Education;
- Mr Pritam Kumar Benee;
- Mrs Sweety Ramchurn;

- Mrs U. Bhoojhawon;
- Mr Lindsay Kunthasami;
- Mr D. Mohadeb;
- Mr S.B.A. Fatehmamode.

All these persons derive an allowance of Rs2,000 per sitting.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.944 – *International/Regional Games of which (k) Africa and Asia Pacific Choir Games*, can we have more details for this expense, please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, this is for the hosting of the Africa and Asia Pacific Choir Games which will be held next year in Mauritius.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 26313.141 – *Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd*, there has been a significant increase of Rs10 m., can we know why? And can we also know the composition of the Board and the allocation perceived by the members?

Mr Toussaint: There are three questions in one question. First of all, I will reply concerning the increase. This is due to increase in human resource costs, maintenance, minor repairs and also, to cater for the Liverpool Football Club Academy Licence Fees.

Second question: for the Board, the Chairperson is Mr Jean Pierre Sauzier, deriving a monthly allowance of Rs73,500. All the Board Directors derive an allowance of Rs26,250 and they are –

- Dr. S. Kowlessur;
- Mr S. Jootun;

- Mrs D. Ramchurn;
- Mr M.J. Ramsamy, the PS of the Ministry;
- Mrs S.B.I. Rawat Currimjee;
- Mr D. Ramluckhun, and
- Mr R. K. Sultoo.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.008 – *Medals, Prizes and Rewards*, can the hon. Minister inform the House on the substantive increase in the sum allocated for the next financial year?

Mr Toussaint: In the current financial year, it is Rs5 m. In the next financial year, as from 01 July, it will be Rs10 m. We are making provision in view to reward our athletes who eventually will do well in the Olympics and Paralympic Games which are forthcoming.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 26313.045 – *Mauritius Sports Council*, can I know from the hon. Minister where matters stand with regard to the upgrading or renovation of the Anjalay Coopen Stadium announced last year?

Mr Toussaint: Ce n'est pas dedans.

The Chairperson: This is not in the discussion. So, we will now move on to hon. Woochit.

Mr Woochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31113.006 – *Construction of Sports Infrastructure of which (a) Multi-Sports Complex Triplet*, can we have the date of completion, please?

Mr Toussaint: The date of completion is being revised because the contractor, RBRB Construction Ltd, *est en train d'avoir du retard. Donc, on saura bientôt parce qu'on attend une réunion avec lui.*

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Item 28211.056 – *Football Clubs*, there is an amount of Rs15.4 m. budgeted for 2024-2025, here, in the Estimates but the hon. Minister of Finance in Budget Speech announced an amount of Rs17.2 m. Can we know which amount is correct? Is it the Rs15.4 m. or is it the Rs17.2 m.?

Mr Toussaint: No, Mr Chairperson, I cannot reply on which is correct or not correct. I can reply to a question asked on this specific item.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.944 – *International/Regional Games of which (k) Africa and Asia Pacific Choir Games*, Rs11 m. budgeted last, Rs40 m. this year and Rs50 m. next year, Rs100 m. So, may we have a breakdown of how this Rs100 m. will be spent for this singing competition?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, this is, for example, for payment renting for different venues, transport costs, administrative costs, communication and technical costs. There is no specific breakdown for the moment. The team will be working the specific breakdown.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 337. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Item 31113.406 – *Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (c) Glen Park Multisports Complex*, peut-on obtenir du ministre les détails sur les travaux qui seront entrepris au complexe sportif de Glen Park, s'il vous plaît ? Merci.

Mr Toussaint: No, these are minor works that have already been done. There is only Rs50,000 which represents retention money. These are minor works.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item *31113.406 – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (h) Others-Basic Sports Facilities around the Island*, out of the Rs6 m. budgeted for this year, may I know from the hon. Minister, whether any amount is budgeted for sport facilities in Constituency No. 2, Port Louis?

Mr Toussaint: De mémoire, je ne pense que le ministère, nous avons des infrastructures sportives dans la Circonscription No. 2. Non, *Local Government*.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Item *31113.406 – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (a) Lighting of Training Grounds*, can we know if *Stade Ghurburrun* at Triolet is included in this budget?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the Stadium Rabindranath Ghurburrun is in the project. There is a lot of work to do there.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Still under the Item *31113.406 – Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure (c) Glen Park Multisports Complex*. Le ministre vient de répondre à la question de l'honorable Anquetil, mais peut-il préciser quels travaux ont été entrepris pour cette somme de 1 million et est-ce que le complexe est opérationnel et ouvert en ce moment ?

Mr Toussaint: Comme je l'ai dit, *these are minor works*. Nous avons des petites réparations à faire dans le complexe, que ce soit au niveau de la salle, ainsi de suite. Bon, si besoin, je demanderai une liste complète. Si c'est opérationnel, je vais vérifier avec *le Mauritius Sports Council*.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are still on page 337 at Sub-Head 14-103: Youth Services. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item *22030 – Rent*, can we know from the hon. Minister what is the rental for?

Mr Toussaint: This is for the rental of vehicles, equipment and several facilities for our different activities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can the hon. Minister tell us what this amount is meant for?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, this is for the payment of monthly salary to Advisers –

- Mr Pittea, K., Adviser on Public Relation, deriving a monthly salary of Rs35,750 and monthly allowance for telephone and so on, Rs5,825, and for
- Miss Seebaruth, D., Adviser on Documentation, Rs31,625, with other allowances for telephone and so on, Rs2,475.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 338. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.158 – *Mauritius Recreation Council*, can we know from the hon. Minister, out of this amount which was budgeted, Rs17 m. in 2023-2024, if the full amount has been spent and can we have a breakdown of it, please?

Mr Toussaint: Whether the full amount is spent, I cannot tell it today because the financial year has not yet ended. We have to wait for the end of the financial year. This sum is for the payment for the members of the Board, administrative costs, staff costs, projects and programmes, equipment, and materials. So, there are a lot of activities that have been organised, for example, recreational activities, even in Rodrigues. There is a long list of different activities that have been organised.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 338, Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, may the hon. Minister enlighten us on these studies and surveys, who conducted them and on what item were they carried out?

Mr Toussaint: This was done in-house. A National Youth Study was carried out with a sample of 4,000 youths, aged between 14 and 35 years, to explore the needs and aspirations of

the youth and consequently support our objectives of youth empowerment. The survey has been completed up to around 50% and there will be another step. Like I said, this is done in-house.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Item 31112.407 – *Upgrading of Youth Centres (c) Other Youth Centres*, peut-on savoir du ministre si le *Youth Centre* de Floréal fait partie de la liste des *youth centres* qui seront rénovés ? Merci.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, the Youth Centre of Floréal, like you know, has completely been renovated and revamped into a modern youth hub. *Ou pa dan sirkonskripsion madam!*

Ms Anquetil: Non, je suis. Il n'y pas de *fencing*.

The Chairperson: Thank you from everyone in the constituency.

Mr Toussaint: Enfin!

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 26313.068 – *National Youth Council*, I note an increase of almost 100%, from Rs2,400,000 to Rs4,800,000. May we know the reasons thereof? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson. As from the next financial year, the National Youth Council has the responsibility of the National Youth Award and also, it will have to cater for the Special Youth Outreach Programme. Also, these are the costs associated to the Management of the Helvetia Youth Hub.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 28211.043 – *Mauritius Scouts Association*. There has been a significant decrease in the allocation to the Mauritius Scouts Association. Can we know why?

Mr Toussaint: The standard grant that we give to the Scouts Association is Rs105,000. This current financial year, there has been a special request to help the Scouts Association that

participated in the 20th World Scout Jamboree 2023 in Korea. That is why they received an additional and special amount of money of Rs1 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.951 – *Smart Youth Programmes (b) Duke of Edinburgh International Award*, may we know how many Rodriguan youths are involved in this programme?

Mr Toussaint: We have around 415 youths from Rodrigues participating in the different levels of the Duke of Edinburgh International Award.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22090 – *Security*, can we know the name of the service provider, please?

Mr Toussaint: None. There is no service provider for the moment because the bidding exercise is still ongoing.

Vote 14-1 Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Rs897,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4.13 p.m.)

Vote 15-1 National Infrastructure was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour! We are on page 345, Sub-Head 15-101: General.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know from the hon. Minister the list of beneficiaries, the amount, and their specific qualifications?

Mr Hurreeram: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. This provision is for the payment of salaries to two Senior Advisers, one Adviser in Public Relation. So –

- (i) One Adviser, Mr D. Gaoneadry, former Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, holder of a Diploma in

Public Administration and Management from the University of Mauritius. The salary is as recommended by the PRB, that is, Rs94,000;

- (ii) Senior Adviser, Mr Veer Seerungen, holder of a BSc (Hons) in Banking and Finance from the University of Mauritius and drawing a monthly salary of Rs68,000;
- (iii) One Adviser, Mr Shanmuga Allagapen, holder of a Diploma in Journalism and Newswriting from London School of Journalism and a BA (Hons) Law and Management from the Open University Mauritius, and is drawing a monthly salary of Rs66,200;
- (iv) One Adviser in Public Relation, Mr Vidianun Beeharry, who is drawing a monthly salary of Rs25,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 346, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 26313.165 – *Construction Industry Authority*, through legislation, the CIDB has been enhanced to CIA, enhanced abilities to collect revenue, and yet, we are being asked to vote for Rs5 m. for the CIA this year. I thought it would have been autonomous in terms of financing.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this provision is for the funding of part of the operating costs of the Construction Industry Authority. These comprise of salaries, travelling and construction, travelling of employees, council and committee fees, cost of utilities, rental, etc. As we all know, the CIA also generates revenue. So, the other funds will come from their own funds.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22170 – *Travelling within the Republic*, I notice a slight decrease for this item, may we have the explanation?

Mr Hurreeram: As of 31 May, the expenditure is nil, so, there has not been any money spent. The sum that has been allocated is as per the trend of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Item 22030.005 – *Rental of Facilities for Events*, may we have a breakdown of the amount paid and events for which that was paid?

Mr Hurreeram: These are provisions for tent services, podiums and other facilities to socio-cultural organisations for the organisation of socio-cultural activities at national, regional, and community levels. So, we have a full list of those events that have been organised all around the island and what is also being given to us by the task force. The amount that has been spent at now is Rs16.8 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030.001 – *Rental of Building*, can the hon. Minister provide details on the expenditure?

Mr Hurreeram: These are provisions for payment of rental of building at Moorgate House and Medine Mews –

- Moorgate House, 8th Floor, 5,125 square feet;
- Moorgate House, 4th Floor, 9th Floor, and 10th Floor, a total amount 13,723 square feet;
- Moorgate House, 3rd Floor, 5,000 square feet, and
- Medine Mews, 10th Floor, 5,555 square feet.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Last question from hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 26313.165 – *Construction Industry Authority*, can we know if there is a Board and what is the composition of the Board?

Mr Hurreeram: The Chairperson is Mr Tarkaswar Cowaloosur and the Members are –

- Mr Vasant Ramtohul, representative of the Ministry of National Infrastructure;
- Mr Ajay Teeluckdharry, representative of the Ministry of Local Government;
- Mr Vidianand Toofanny, representative of SMEs of the Construction Industry;
- Mr Anand Juddoo, representative of Professional Quantity Surveyors' Council;
- Mr Shaileen Beejadarsing, representative of the Building and Civil Engineering Contractors Association;

- Mrs Priya D. Chadee, representative of the Ministry of Environment;
- Mr R. Sewpal, representative of the Professional Architects' Council;
- Mr Chandansingh Chutoori, representative of the Association of Consulting Engineers;
- Mr D. Jhuboo, representative of the Council of Registered Professional Engineers;
- Mr Peerbocca, representative of the Building Material Manufacturer Association;
- Mr George Brasse, Member of the Civil Society;
- Mr L. Stephane St Mart;
- Mrs Subhashini Gopee, and
- the Secretary, Mr Vinay Kumar Rawoo, Manager Corporate Services at the CIA.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are still on page 346, Sub-Head 15-102: National Infrastructure Division. Page 347, hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31112.433 – *Refurbishment of Office Buildings*, Rs51,580,000, can we have the list of buildings, please?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is for the repairs that are due at Emmanuel Anquetil Building. There are minor repair works that need to be undertaken. Fire fighting issues that need to be looked into at the same building; waterproofing works, metal handrails and replacement of window panes, still at Emmanuel Anquetil Building, and also there is the electrical equipment system that need to be looked into. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now at page 348, Sub-Head 15-103: Road Construction and Maintenance. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président. *Item 31112.001 – Construction of Office Building at Grannum, Vacoas*, peut-on savoir du ministre à quelle phase se trouve actuellement ce projet de construction ? Je vous remercie.

Mr Hurreeram: Concerning Grannum, these are provisions that have been made for the construction of a new suboffice for the RDA staff, as there is currently no suboffice for the RDA in the region of Plaines Wilhems. The bid was launched in Financial Year 2023-24, but the bid obtained was 25% higher than cost estimates, so, we have to relaunch.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item *31113.003 – Construction and upgrading of roads of which (r) Motorway M4 (Phase 3) from Bel Air to Grand Bel Air (consultancy)*, may we know from the Minister the objectives behind having this consultancy done?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, as a Government that wants to preserve the environment, and we know that the M4 is a very important motorway that will benefit a lot to the inhabitants of the south and the eastern part of the island, we also have to preserve Vallée de Ferney. So, this is why this consultancy has been put in place to be able to work on the feasibility of a new alignment that will link Grand Bel Air to Bel Air, bypassing Vallée de Ferney.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item *26313.079 – Road Development Authority*, can I ask the hon. Minister why the substantial increase in provision, from Rs159 m. to Rs175 m.?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, as it is for all the employees of this country, it is also for the employees of the RDA. We have to cater. Provision is being made here for compensation that needs to be paid in the year 2024, the readjustment with the minimum salary and other administrative costs such as travelling, transport and uniform, amongst others.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *31113.003 – Construction and upgrading of roads of which (e) Reconstruction of Jumbo Phoenix Roundabout and SAJ Bridge*, an amount of Rs135 m. is earmarked for this year. May I know what amount of this Rs135 m. relates to the SAJ Bridge which has just been inaugurated? What additional work is required there?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, there is no additional work. What we are catering for here is consultancy services as this is a unique structure, not only in Mauritius but in this part of the world. So, we need expertise of our consultant to continue to monitor the health of the bridge. In fact, it is a new bridge, so, we have to monitor: what is happening, how it is behaving with load, with the climate and all. This is for what the money has been catered for.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 349. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At the bottom of the page, Item *31132.401 – Computerisation Project of RDA*, may we know from the hon. Minister what exactly will be computerised at the RDA?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the RDA intends to implement an Integrated Management Information System where its main departments will have their own computer-based information system to manage and automate their routine task and provide middle and top management tools to assist and provide a more organised and flexible approach to making decision necessary to swiftly achieve the public expectations.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. le président. Item *31113.003 –Construction and upgrading of roads of which (z) Junction on A1 Road at Pointe Aux Sables*, un montant de R 50 millions a été earmarked, est-ce qu'on peut savoir les détails de ce projet-là et quand est-ce que les travaux vont débuter ?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, there is no provision for this financial year.

The Chairperson: No provision for this financial year. So, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item *31113.004 – Construction and upgrading of bridges at (d) Cavendish, Ville Noire*, Rs11 m. I can see that was spent last year. What is it about?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, my hon. colleague will agree that the current Cavendish Bridge, which we have renovated, is a *patrimoine* but it remains small *et très étroit*. So, now, we have to study how we can eventually link Mahebourg to the other stand part of the island, on or about that same place and try to design something else to ease the movement of the people of No. 12 towards the east of the island. This is what the provision is for for us to start studying what the different possibilities are.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Same Item 31113.004 – *Construction and upgrading of bridges at (b) Riviere des Anguilles near MCB (footbridge)*, may we know the status for this project, starting date and expected completion date? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: This project consists of design and construction of footbridge for safety of pedestrians on that main road.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 31113.403 – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation (a) Roads and Bridges*, an amount Rs400 m. is earmarked for this year. May I know from the hon. Minister what amount out of this Rs400 m. is earmarked for project in Constituency No. 2?

Mr Hurreeram: This budget is for the RDA, Mr Chairperson, mainly for the main roads, our motorways and our classified roads. So, if the hon. Member has any bridge which he is thinking of, he may communicate it to me then I will give him a specific reply. Here, it is difficult for me to give a specific reply.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31113.403 – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation (e) Whole Life Asset Management System*. No project value has been indicated here, but it is safe to say that Rs40 m. was earmarked for the financial year that is ending and another exactly Rs40 m. for this year. Does this mean that the project has not been implemented last year, because even the Director of Audit is quite critical about Life Asset Management at the Ministry?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, in fact, there was a tender that was launched in March 2021; the RDA shortlisted four firms. I have a list of them for the Whole Life Asset Management System. The procurement exercise was unsuccessful as the bid received was well above estimated costs. So, in light of the foregoing, RDA is now seeking the services of a Road Asset Management Specialist at the Korea Expressway Corporation to assist in the review of the TOR as well as the bidding process, evaluation and contract management for successful development and implementation of the project.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 350, Sub-Head 15-104: Electrical Services Division. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *31112.401 – Renovation of Ex-Tobacco Board Building - Claudette - 1st Floor*, may I know from the hon. Minister what this building will be used for?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is a provision for the complete maintenance of the 1st Floor of the Claudette Building at the Ex-Tobacco Board compound in Plaine Lauzun. The building was owned by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and has been now vested to MNI. So, we need to upgrade it to our standards so as our officers of the Electrical Services Division can move in.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. I see no further question.

Vote 15-1 National Infrastructure (Rs2,835,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.
(4.33 p.m.)

Vote 15-2 National Development Unit was called.

The Chairperson: We are page 356. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item *22030 – Rent*, can the hon. Minister give us a list of the premises that are being rented?

Mr Hurreeram: Provision has been made for the rental of building, Mezzanine, Level 10, Level 11, Level 12 at Citadelle Mall, and rental of 54 parking slots.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 357, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item *26313.155 – Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd*, can the hon. Minister circulate the list of drains that have been constructed by the company region-wise?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants the Minister to circulate the list.

Mr Hurreeram: I have the list, I will circulate it.

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

Ms J. Bérenger: Sous le même item, *Item 26313.155 – Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd*, peut-on savoir qui est à la tête du *Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd* et son *salary package* ?

Mr Hurreeram: We currently have Mr Gaoneadry who is acting as Officer-in-Charge. The salary has not yet been determined by the Board.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item *31113.045 – Construction and Upgrading of Amenities of which (b) Small Community Projects*, this is a new item, can we know from the hon. Minister how this money will be spent?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the list of project is available under the PSIP.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item *26313.155 – Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd*, I just heard the Minister saying that the salary package for the Officer-in-Charge is being calculated. Can I ask him whether the CEO, who was there, Mr Ramjattun has resigned recently, and if that is so, why is that so?

The Chairperson: This question is not admissible. Thank you.

Vote 15-2 National Development Unit (Rs563,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, at this stage I will suspend the sitting for 30 minutes. Thank you.

At 4.38 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.22 p.m. with the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Please be seated!

(5.21 p.m.)

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 363, Sub-Head 16-101: General. No questions. Page 364, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22900.041 – *Expenses icw Security Operations Centre*, there is an increase on Rs1.5 m., may we know from the hon. Minister what is the increase for?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the increase is following rise in the project cost for the managed services of the Security Operations Centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants - ICT Blueprint*. May we know who is the consultant and when the Blueprint will be ready?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, this amount was for the consultancy services for the ICT Blueprint. We had launched three bidding exercises. However, the bids were not responsive. Now, in the budget, next financial year, the scope has changed because, now, we are going to do a blueprint for the digital industry instead of the ICT sector. So, this will be a new item for the next financial year and the bids will be launched when the specifications are ready.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.040 – *Cybersecurity Drill (National Honeypot Infrastructure Setup)*. Can the Minister provide details on this project? What is it all about because funds have been allocated for the next financial year?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the Cybersecurity Drill is, in fact, a new project called the National Honeypot Infrastructure Setup and it will be a system as a proactive defence mechanism and serve to identify any new attack on any vulnerability, if there are any, on the system. This is done by the Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. le président. *Item 28213.022 – Mauritius Post Ltd - (Contribution icw Digital Service Centres).* On nous demande de voter pour un montant de R 44 millions. Je voudrais savoir si ce projet couvre également le bureau de poste de Pointe aux Sables vu l'exiguïté de ce centre ?

Mr Balgobin: This item is for the digital service centre in all the posts where we have an ICT corner and we provide free internet services for the public. So, this provision is for the staff working in all those corners and is available in all the posts. It makes provision to, first of all, payment of the staff and in increases that are incurred in terms of their salary and recruitment.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 365, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. *Item 26323.042 – Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (b) Acquisition of Computers & Softwares,* can the hon. Minister tell us why is there an increase for the acquisition of computers and softwares and for what purpose?

Mr Balgobin: This increase is to cater for a new system, Implementation of Grant and Project Management System for the MRIC, that is, all the projects that we do in terms research and innovation, this increase in the amount would cater for all these, management system, acquisition of IT equipment, computers, printers, video conferencing, etc.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Item 31122.834 – GOC Tier IV Data Centre,* may we know what this project is about and whether procurement has already been launched?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the procurement has not been launched because this is an item in the next financial year, as from 01 July. This item is to cater for the Government Online Centre, which is currently an old version; it has made its time. But now, we are going to go for a state-of-the-art Tier IV, like we call it in a technical term, Data Centre and procurement will be launched in the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci. Item 26323.054 – *Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency*, can we have the composition of the Board and the name of the Executive Director together with his qualifications, salaries and other allowances?

Mr Balgobin: The name of the Executive Director is Dr. Suraj Juddoo and he holds a very interesting qualification, a PhD in Artificial Intelligence. For the Board members, I can circulate it; it is a long list.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: His salary?

Mr Balgobin: The salary is as per the PRB, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to Sub-Head 16-102: Central Informatics Bureau. Page 365? Page 366, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22030.007 – *Rent of which Rental of Lines for Government Intranet Network System*, may we know from the hon. Minister to whom the contract was awarded for the lease of the lines?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, first of all, the increase is to cater for additional lines for the GINS connectivity, that is the Government Intranet Services, and the contract had been awarded to Mauritius Telecom.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 366, Item 22120.023 – *Fees of which Licence Fees for Oracle Technical Support*, may we know the name of the company which will be awarded this contract?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, the payment, as mentioned, is for oracle and the company is Oracle.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Same page, 366, Sub-Head 16-103: Central Information Systems Division. Page 366? Page 367, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment of which (a) Setting up of a cutting edge data store at CISD*, may we know from the hon. Minister to whom was this contract awarded?

Mr Balgobin: This decrease in provision, first of all, is because the project is already in implementation and it is going to end in the next financial year. To whom the contract has been awarded, I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Rs972,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.30 p.m.)

Vote 17-1 Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training was called.

The Chairperson: We will be proceeding by sub-head. We are at Sub-Head 17-101: General, page 375. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have the name of the Advisers and the amount paid to them?

Mr Callichurn:

- Mr Gungadeen Chetan, PRO;
- Mr Bundhoo, Lajputh;
- Mr Caremben, Mariahven, Technical Adviser;
- Mr Jouan Marie Joseph Herbert, Technical Adviser;
- Mr Mareemootoo, Deevalen, Adviser in PR Matters, and
- Mr Sungeelee, Alwin, Adviser on Information Matters.

There is also provision for the payment of allowances for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Redundancy Board that is, Mr Hossen Abdool Rashid and Mr Marie Bernard.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to Sub-Head 17-102: Labour and Employment Relations Management. Page 376, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs7 m., may we have the details and breakdown of this figure?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of rental of offices at Victoria House, Silvercrest and regional labour offices. The list is long, I will table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Page 376, no questions? Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, on the next subhead that is 102, there is another amount for rent, item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs28,800,000, can I ask the same question, that is details and breakdown of this figure?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, I just answered.

Mr Ameer Meea: Two rent, there were two subheads, number one subhead 101, rent is Rs7 m. then on the same page.

The Chairperson: We are on page 377. Okay hon. Minister has already canvassed.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, he hasn't canvassed. The another one is Rs28 m.

The Chairperson: I have only one item 22030 – Rent, Rs28,800,000, is that the one you are talking about?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, and on the previous sub-head which is on the same page, there is another amount for rent, Rs7 m.

The Chairperson: We have already gone through the other sub-head. Okay, so we now move to page 377, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you. Under item 26313.013 – *Manufacturing Sector Workers Welfare Fund*, every year we give an amount of Rs4 m., may I know from the hon. Minister who

administer that fund and how much money has been paid out of the fund to the Manufacturing Sector workers?

Mr Callichurn: Well, there is a Board which administers the fund, Mr Chairperson. So the Chairperson of that Board is Mr Hajoory, drawing a monthly allowance of fee of Rs28,500. There is the Government Representative, that is Mr S. Damry, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training; Mrs Jodhoa, Head Gender Unit of the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare; Mr Ramdoyal, Senior Analyst, Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives; Mr Beeharry and so on. There are representatives of the employers, representatives of the workers. So, I will table the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Sub-Head 17-103: Registration of Associations and Trade Unions, page 377, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On item 21110.001 - *Basic Salary*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any vacancy in the post of Registrar of Association or Deputy Registrar of Association?

Mr Callichurn: I have been provided with the information that the increase is for the payment of increment in for January 2025 as regard to any vacancy that is there to be filled. Unfortunately, I do not have the information. I am told that all vacancies have already been filled.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 378, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, page 378, item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs2,960,000, may we have the details and breakdown of this figure?

Mr Callichurn: The provision is for the rental of office space at Silvercrest Court, that is, for a monthly rental amount of Rs204,338.16.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now at Sub-Head 17-104: Employment Facilitation. Page 378, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, Rs2.4 m. May we have the details of this amount?

Mr Callichurn: The provision is for the salary and allowances to Consultant and Special Adviser, that is, Mr Ramburn Hooteshsing who is a migration consultant. So, he is appointed, the current contract period is from 01 January 2024 and it will expire on 21 December 2024. And also for Mrs Roberts-Holmes Lucinda, Special Adviser in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and she has as duty to advise on the other operationalisation of the STA, to advice on the improvements to be made in the TVET Sector and to advice on training and development in general.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, may we know to whom?

The Chairperson: Already been canvassed! Page 379, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 28212.028 - (d) *Training and Placement of Persons with Disabilities*, may we know how many persons benefited from this programme please? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: For the period of July 2023 to 31 May 2024, a list of 88 persons with disabilities was submitted by the Training and Employment of Persons with Disability Board. All 88 were called for interview, only 23 were present, out of the 23, 22 were offered placement in different Ministries and Departments.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same item 28212.028 - (a) *Youth Employment Programme*, why is there a decrease in sum allocation and is this programme extended to Rodrigues?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, the decrease in the Budget Estimates for 2024-2025 is due to the fact that the declining trend of expenditure for Financial Year 2023, implementation of other competing schemes with higher stipend such as *Prime à L'Emploi*, which, in fact, the stipend is Rs15,000 and targeting also youth from the age of 18 to 35 and women below 50 year old.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Item 28212.028 - (b) *Women Back to Work Programme*, could we know the number of women who have benefited from this programme?

Mr Callichurn: During the Financial Year of 2023-2024, 17 women were placed in different sectors, 19 women have been trained in different fields such as hairdressing technic, beauty therapy, bakery, early childhood and elderly and disabled, gardening. 10 women are presently following short course training in hairdressing and 15 women are following the basic IT Application Course.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under item 28212.028 - *Youth Employment Programme*, may I know from the hon. Minister, the number of beneficiaries under that Programme and the number of which have been retained in employment at the end of the Programme?

Mr Callichurn: The Youth Employment Programme which was initiated back in 2013 and transferred to my Ministry in 2015 has enabled so far 25,569 youth to be placed in companies and altogether agreement signed, that is, who have been able to secure employment, I presume. I only have information as regard to the placement. As regards the securing of employment, I don't have this information.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger, last question!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultants* - (*National Employment Policy*), can we have the list of the Consultants, please?

Mr Callichurn: I will table the information.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now on page 380, Sub-Head 17-105: Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under item 26313.027 - *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of students who attend courses in MITD?

Mr Callichurn: They are altogether because there are lots of courses being run by the MITD. So, for the year 2023, from January to December, we have had a total of 3,869, that is,

full time students apprenticeship, part time also and for the ITIET 3,192, for EHSGD 1,669, that is a total of 8,730; from January to May 2024, total is 5,158 enrolments for that period and for other training programmes, there are more. So, I am given to understand that there are an additional 422 for ITIET and for EHSGD 13, again ITIET 92.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are on page 380, next Sub-Head 17-106: Human Resource Development. Thank you.

Vote 17-1 Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (Rs852,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.48 p.m.)

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness was called.

The Chairperson: We are at page 390, Sub-Head 18-101: General. Page 191, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, can I have a breakdown of the Extra Assistance?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the Extra Assistance is for the Advisers –

- Dr. Gaud;
- Dr. Bundhoo;
- Mr Subdhan;
- Mr Palawan;
- Dr. Tauckkoor;
- Mr Tapesar;
- Dr. Jhugroo;
- Dr. Nundlall, and
- Dr. Ndlovu

Regarding the pay package, I will table all the information.

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

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 - (d) *Digital Health Strategy and Legislation*, can you give more details and whether it will be nationwide?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. So, provision is made for consultancy services in respect of preparation of digital health architecture with related blueprint, road maps and drafting of the digital health law and priority regulations with the collaboration of the United Nations Development Programme.

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

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 22030.008 - *Rental of Cloud Space (e-Health)*, may we know the name of the service provider and the amount of Cloud Space being rented?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, far for the rental of the Cloud Space, provision is made for the rental of a secured cloud space with disaster recovery facilities in Mauritius for the implementation of e-health in a cost effective, secure, scalable and agile manner. So here we are with this project.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22130 - (c) *Health Sector Strategic Plan 2025-2029*, can the hon Minister elaborate?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision made for the formulation of the second health strategic plan in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. So, the third round of progress monitoring of the current HSSP was at August 2023 whereby out of 707 activities identified, 60% were completed, 37% were either initiated or in progress and 3% were planned for the coming years. So, this is for the next strategic plan.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Last question for page 391, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 25510.001 - *Interest Subsidy on Medical Loans (Zero-Interest Medical Loan Scheme)*, that was a measure announced last year and an amount of Rs15 m. was earmarked last year and this year also. So may I know from the

hon. Minister, out of the Rs15 m. earmarked for last year, how much has been spent under this item?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, as of date, a total of 37 applications have been received as follows –

- State Bank of Mauritius: 31
- MauBank: 6

Cumulative expenditure as at 31 May 2024: Rs302,500

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 392, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président, item *27210.018 - Assistance to Patients referred for treatment in Local Private Health Institutions*, peut-on savoir du ministre combien de patients ont bénéficié de cette assistance l'année dernière ? Merci.

Dr. Jagutpal: As at 31 May 2024, 3 patients have been sent to Wellkin Hospital and Eagle Clinic for treatment. Provision made under this item has also been used to finance referral of cataract patients to private health institutions.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item *26313.167 - Central Medical Procurement Authority*, can we know whether this Authority has already been set up and its composition and the members?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, so, this is the composition of the members –

- Chairperson: Mr Ravin Rampersad;
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr Dhanraj Conhye;
- Second Vice-Chairperson: Mr Mooneeswar Seegobin Seetaram;
- Member: Mr Roshan Kumar Sultoo;
- Member: Miss Priya Sonah;
- Member: Dr. Dhanraz Gopal;

- Member: Mr Guy Poule.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Mr Chairperson, item *27210.008 - Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius (Overseas Treatment Scheme)*, may we know the number of patients who have been sent abroad for last year?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, last year so, from January to December 2023, 354 patients and from January to May 2024, 150 patients.

The Chairperson: Thank you, page 393, last question hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, item *31132.118 - Digitalisation of Hospital Services (a) e-Health*, project value Rs633 m., started last year Rs180 m. and this year Rs260 m. budgeted, may I ask the hon. Minister to whom the contract was awarded and when this project will go live?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, I will be a little brief. So, my Ministry entered a Portfolio Agreement in January 2022 with UNDP to implement this project. Following step-by-step extensive evaluation process after the authorisation from the Procurement Office at UNDP Headquarters, award was made on 9 January to the consortium led by TrioTree Technologies, India and comprising Informatics International Mauritius Ltd, Netcom Partners Ltd Mauritius. This is the contract awarded to this company.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! Time over! Sub-Head 18-102: Hospital and Specialised Services. We are on page 393, hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item *22120 - Fees of which Transaction Advisor for Public Private Partnership Projects*, can we know who is the Transaction Advisor and for what projects please?

Dr. Jagutpal: The Transaction Advisor for the three projects –

- The National Health Laboratory;
- Modern Warehouse;

- Medical Consumable.

So, I have one Transaction Advisor here, so letter of award has been issued to Kukuza Project Development Consultant on 10 June 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 393, item *21110.013 – Allowance (Pre-Registration Trainees)*, may I know how many trainees are we talking of for this Rs60 m. budget?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, for the 107 pre-registered doctors are being trained at present.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item *22030 – Rent*, the figures have been decreased; can I have some clarification?

Dr. Jagutpal: Decrease is due to trend of expenditure, so that's why there has been a decrease and the decrease in trend. So provision has been made for leasing of building for Dialysis Unit, Health Club and Ayurvedic Clinic, Warehousing as well. That's because there is a decrease in the trend of expenditure; that's why the amount of money for this year has gone down.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, under item *22120 - Fees of which Transaction Advisor for Public Private Partnership Projects*, so, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Transaction Advisor has been appointed yet?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, as I have stated earlier. So, the letter of award has been issued to Kukuza Project Development Consultant Ltd.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! Page 394, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22140.001 - *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, with regard to procurement of medical supplies, drugs and equipment, can we circulate the list of medical supplies, drug and equipment with suppliers and amount paid?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, this can be circulated.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Same vote item 22140.001 - *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines of which Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme*, can we have more details with regard to this programme?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, provision was made for inoculation for girls and boys aged 15 to 19 years. February this year to May this year, 19,890 children that is 13,543 boys and 6,347 girls have been vaccinated. It is targeted to vaccinate additional 12,000 children in 2024 and 13,000 in 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Mr Chairperson page 394, item 26313.095 - *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*, Rs370 m. was budgeted for last financial year, can we have some details with regard to this?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the details for the services that have been provided with this sum of money from the interventions from July 2023 to May 2024 –

- Cardiac Surgeries: 842;
- Re-openings: 92;
- Angiography: 2,620;
- Angioplasty: 813;
- other cardiology cases: 62.

So, the recurrent expenditures include payroll, consumable and disposables and other utilities while capital expenditure Rs1 m. caters for small infrastructural upgrading and so on.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 394, item 22150 - *Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies*, there has been an increase of about Rs100 m. Will the hon. Minister give us more details regarding same?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, provision for the purchase of reagents, chemicals and laboratory equipment for the Central Health Laboratory. Increase is due to additional tests and increase in prices of laboratory equipment and supplies. So, I have a whole list of the details of all the additional tests been procured for dengue and the number of tests as well. I can table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22140.007 - *Renal Dialysis - Consumables and Fees*, every year there is an amount of Rs126 m. which is budgeted and same as last year. For last year's figure, can I ask the hon. Minister the number of renal dialysis that has been performed in private clinics and also the amount that has been paid?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, so for the private clinics, payment of one dialysis session in private clinic costing 800 and cost of consumable is 500 per kit which is provided by the Ministry and the number of patients has been 215.

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

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Let me come back to the budgetary item 26313.095 - *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*, the hon. Minister has just gave us the number of patients that has been operated on, can he also provide us the number of patients who are on waiting list, waiting for either an angioplasty or open heart surgery at the level of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, I think I will circulate the paper.

The Chairperson: If the hon. Minister can please circulate at a later stage. We now move to page 395, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.003 - (m) *Onsite infrastructure for Health Hub at Cote D'Or*, may we know from the hon. Minister the details of the setting up of a Health Hub at Côte d'Or?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, provision for funds has been made to the yearly payment to Landscope onsite infrastructure works and maintenance for the 40 arpents of land rented at Côte d'Or for the construction of warehouse, laboratory and our youth centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 31122.801 - *Acquisition of Medical Equipment*, there is a fund of Rs222 m. provided for the acquisition, can we know what medical equipment is being purchased?

Dr. Jagutpal: For acquisition of high-tech medical equipment, anesthetic machines and other medical equipment for all regional hospital through competitive tendering. I have the list of acquisition of medical equipment. I will table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, item 31112.403 - *Upgrading of Hospitals (b) Dr. A. G Jeetoo Hospital*, an amount of Rs10 m. is budgeted for this year and the following two years. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what this project relates to, the upgrading of duty hospital, whether this contract has already been awarded and what are the works relating to?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, tiling works in wards, partitioning works and maintenance, replacement of water boilers, chest clinic water circulation works and there is a list of works that have been already undertaken at Jeetoo Hospital. So, I will table the list.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 31112.403 - *Upgrading of Hospitals (e) Victoria Hospital*, can the hon. Minister list all the upgrading works being done at Victoria?

Dr. Jagutpal: Victoria Hospital, yes it includes flooring, painting, replacement of wooden structure, upgrading of washrooms and bathrooms. So, the list of upgrading works being circulated.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 395, item 31122.811 - *Acquisition of CCTV Cameras in Hospitals*, we have a recurrent expenditure of Rs2 m. every year, how many cameras are we talking of on an annual basis? How many cameras are we purchasing and from whom? Who is the supplier of this CCTV Cameras?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, in addition to existing CCTV Cameras at Health Institutions, cameras were installed at –

- Jeetoo Hospital: 1
- Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital: 14
- Brown Sequare Mental Health Care: 18
- SSRN Hospital: 43
- Bruno Cheong Hospital: 5
- Nehru Hospital: 8
- New Souillac Hospital: 3
- Victoria Hospital: 1

Total 93. So, for the different suppliers of these cameras, I will circulate all the names of the suppliers.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now at Sub-Head 18-103: Primary Health Care and Public Health. Page 395, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, there was an amount of Rs75 m. budgeted for last financial year; can we have details with regard to this amount? To whom this amount has been paid?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, this item provision made for payment of responsibility allowance, extra duty allowance, book allowance to doctors and the different sum allocated. I will be tabling the entire sum allocated to different grades of staff.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 31112.005 - *Construction of Community Health Centres (CHC) (b) Roche Bois CHC*, can I know from the hon. Minister where matters stand?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, here on 29 March 2024, the project request form was submitted to the Ministry of Finance. The contract was awarded to Ganessen Contractor Ltd in February 2021 for an amount of Rs36 m. Construction started in June 2021 due to poor performance of the contractor, the contract has been terminated and performance security to an amount of Rs3.6 m. has been seized and now based on the budgetary provision, the design, cost and estimate and tender documents are being reviewed by consultant prior to finalisation. So, this will be again tendered soon.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, the sum has been the same despite an increase in the amount of services and amount of patients attending health care services. Can the hon. Minister explain why?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, the provision was made for procurement of medicines, drugs, dental material. So, the drugs and vaccines include expanded programme of immunisation. In fact, this one is made for vaccines, for drugs in health centres and the sum has been the same because the cumulative expenditure by 31 May has been of that amount. So, that's why the same amount has been budgeted. And the budget for drugs spread over a different vote so that's why it is not only in this vote.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31112.004 - *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC) (a) Henrietta AHC*, may we know the status for this project, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, on 15 March 2024, the project request form was submitted to the Ministry of Finance and based on the budgetary provision, design, cost and estimate, tender documents are being reviewed by the consultant prior to finalisation. So, the consultant is reviewing the tender documents.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 396, same item 31112.004 - *Construction of Community Health Centres (CHC) (b) Cap Malheureux AHC*, will the hon. Minister give us an update regarding same for this project of Rs124.5 m.?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, progress of works as at 25 April 2024 is 43%. The project is expected to be completed by September 2024.

The Chairperson: Very good! Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, M. le président, item 31112.005 - *Construction of Community Health Centres (CHC) (d) Pointe aux Sables CHC*. Donc, avec un *project value* de R 34.3 million, cette année on nous demande de voter pour un montant de R 2.4 million pour un centre qui a un médecin à temps partiel et pas de dentiste comme promise auparavant. Peut-on avoir les détails sur ce vote s'il vous plaît ?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this question is on the services, a PQ would be welcome by hon. Member.

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

Mr Uteem: Under item 22090 – Security, may I know from the hon. Minister to whom the contract was awarded?

Dr. Jagutpal: The contract awarded to Top Security Services Limited for Health Regions 1 and 2 and Security Solutions Limited for Health Regions 4 and 5.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 397, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31112.405 - *Upgrading of Community Health Centres*, can I ask the Minister whether for the Albion Dispensary Community Health Centre, provision has been made for the upgrading of the centre in this financial year?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, rest assured hon. Member that provision will be made for the upgrading of Albion Community Health Centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Do we have any more questions on page 397? Thank you. So, we are now on Sub-Head 18-104: Treatment and Prevention of HIV, AIDS and Drug Abuse. Page 397. Page 398, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 22900.982 - *Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, do we know how many patients are on this programme?

Dr. Jagutpal: It is a sensitisation and awareness campaign on synthetic and other drugs targeting mainly the youth in and out of the schools as well as in the community. So, it is more likely to be sensitisation programme.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yea, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 - *Drug Users Administrative Panel*, may we know from the hon. Minister the number of application made to the Panel and the number of patients who have been successfully provided with the programme?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, so this Panel has been recently set up and it is sitting in two divisions. As at 13 June 2024, the ADSU has referred 86 drug users to DUAP. The Panel has heard 33 cases and has reverted them to the Harm Reduction Unit for treatment at the different centres across the island. So, this DUAP has recently been operational.

The Chairperson: Thank you. So, we are now on Sub-Head 18-105: Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases and Promotion of Quality of Life. Page 398, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, under the last item 22900.903 - *Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign*, may I know from the hon. Minister out of the Rs20 m. that was budgeted last year, how much money has been spent under that item?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, provision made for the payment of contract signed with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), the contract value is Rs20 m. yearly for 2 years, that is 2023-2024. So, this has been the amount, so, it is Rs20 m.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 398, item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, were Rs5.5 m., may we know who are the supplier or suppliers of these items?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, I will table all the list of medical disposables and minor equipment for this item.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness (Rs17,200,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.20 p.m.)

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping was called.

The Chairperson: We are starting at Sub-Head 19-101: General. Page 415, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, can we have some more details about this?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Extra Assistance is met for –

- One Adviser on Information Matters, Mr Anacootee. Salary is Rs69,600 plus salary compensations and benefits as per PRB.
- One Adviser on Public Relation Matters, Mr Newoor, salary Rs28,025 plus salary compensations plus travelling allowance.
- One Adviser on Welfare of Fishers Community, Mr P. Bauhadoor, salary Rs40,850 plus salary compensation plus benefits as per PRB.

There is also in the previous 2023, there was for a Head, Blue Economy Unit but it has not been yet recruited. So, no provision has been made in the next budget.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you. Item *21110.004 – Allowances*, we are asked to vote a sum of Rs3.2 m. Could we know to whom these allowances are being paid?

Mr Maudhoo: Which subsection please?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *21110.004 – Allowances*.

Mr Maudhoo: That is provision made for the payment of responsibility *ad hoc* allowances to officers shouldering additional responsibilities for replacing their colleagues on leave, mission, extra duty, entertainment and internet allowance to senior offices in accordance to PRB report 2021.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 416, Item *26313.040 – Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI)*. We have an increase of Rs6 m. in that allocation. Will the hon. Minister give us details about same?

The Chairperson: We are now on page 416.

Mr Maudhoo: .040?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Maudhoo: That's provision for MOI to meet its recurrent expenditure for 2023-24. Provision increased to meet the cost of additional staff and rising cost of repairs and maintenance.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Under the same Item *26313.040 – Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI)*. May we know the name of the Chairman and his salary package?

Mr Maudhoo: The Chairperson is Dr, Nadeem Nazurally. He is a senior lecturer of the University of Mauritius. I will table the pay package; I do not have it here.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, sorry, it is Rs40,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are on page 416. No question? So, we are on now on page 417 Sub-Head 19-102 – Shipping. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance* – Can we have some details about this?

Mr Maudhoo: Provision for payment of salary of officers in scarcity area namely –

- Nautical surveyor;
- Marine engineering surveyor;
- Marine engineering inspector;
- Nautical Inspector;
- Naval Architect and Training Certification and Standards Officer.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28213.010 – *Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd.* There is an increase of Rs20 m., may we know why the increase for same?

Mr Maudhoo: Which Item please?

Ms Tour: Item 28213.010 – *Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd.*

Mr Maudhoo: Rs5 m. as subsidy for waving of freight charges of containers from Rodrigues to Mauritius for agricultural products. Rs5 m. for consultancy services to replace the Mauritius Trochetia and Rs55 m. to cater for 20% rebate on sea freight or shipment of commodities from Mauritius to Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 25210.002 – *Ferry Boat Operators*. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of applications received for the subsidy and the amount disbursed under that Item?

Mr Maudhoo: The provision for payment of Ferry Boat Service provided at GRSE, the contractor is Mr Manohar and the contract amount is Rs418,800, that is Rs34,900 monthly.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 417, Item 22900.977 – *Expenses icw Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations*. For last year it was Rs2 m., now it is Rs1 m. For last year may I know how many search operations were carried out?

Mr Maudhoo: This is in relation to provision made to pay for the services provided under the e-Broadcast system and USAR map software. The two softwares are used during search and rescue operations for more efficient and precise search areas. Obviously the provision decreased as shipping division will now use SAR map software instead of Themis SAR search and rescue which was more expensive.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 28213.010 – *Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd*. Can I know from the hon. Minister the name, qualification and pay package of the Director?

Mr Maudhoo: We don't have it. I will table it.

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Minister will table. Page 418, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Still on same Sub-Head 19-102. Item 31122.832 – *Acquisition of Global Maritime Distress and Safety Equipment (GMDSS)*. Let me know if this contract has already been allocated and the name of the supplier.

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, last year it was in replacement. Since this budget of the actual Global Maritime Distress and Safety Equipment which was 10 years old. In December 2023, my Ministry signed an agreement with the Mauritius Telecom for the replacement of the

second set of equipment at a cost of Rs57 m. to be paid over two Financial Years. The project is expected to be completed by end of May 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Sub-Head 19-103 – Mauritius Maritime Training Academy, page 418. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Under Item *31113.413- Upgrading of Slipway/Jetty*. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the status of that project?

Mr Maudhoo: The project of fencing at the FITECH Jetty completed in March 2024. The installation, in fact the jetty is there, in fact the installation of live boats, davits completed by CNOI awarded body in June 2024. Only thing that remains is that provision for the release and retrieval system and the hooks necessary for the safe and efficient of live boats during practical classes. In fact, the works have been completed. We are just waiting with regards to the hooks to be deployed over there.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item *21110.005 – Extra Assistance*. Can I know from the hon. Minister, to whom the Extra assistance has been paid?

Mr Maudhoo: This is for the mechanical officer, fishing boat inspector, for engineering, nautical, second hand fishing, motorman, the skipper and the deck and fisherman which is to mend the investigator in the sphyrna which is there with regard to the deployment of fads in the high seas.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping (Rs348,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.33 p.m.)

Vote 19-2 Fisheries was called.

The Chairperson: We are starting at Sub-Head 19-201 – Fisheries Development. Page 422, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know to whom the Extra Assistance is paid, please?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is again provision made for payment of salary to the following post to be recruited on contract –

- 1) Skipper;
- 2) Deck men;
- 3) Motormen;
- 4) Technical Mechanical Engineer;
- 5) Fish boat inspector;
- 6) Second hand fishing; and
- 7) Observers.

But that is EU funded for payment of sea going allowance to 10 observers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 423, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22120.024 – *Fees icw Capacity Building Programme (a) Training of new fishers*. May we know from the hon. Minister how many fishermen received training from this amount last year?

Mr Maudhoo: For the current year, Mr Chairperson, the training was dispensed to 295 fishers which include 264 males and 31 ladies who were trained at the FITECH of my Ministry.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26210.095 – *Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)*. Last year, we voted for an amount of Rs5 m. and this year we are asked to vote for a sum Rs8 m. Can we have more information on this boat?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, In fact, this is provision for payment of annual contribution as a Member State. The payment of the yearly contribution to the IOTC is

calculated on the basis of the tune catch of the Member country. So, this contribution has increased due to an increase in our catch.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Page 423, Item 22900.042 – *Reward for Sighting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Vessels (EU funded)*. Can you elaborate, hon. Minister?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, an amount of Rs1 m. has been made available under the EU fund to reward vessel operator in same industrial Mauritian operators which have sited vessels involved IUU fishing with a view to curbing illegal fishing and to encouraging vessel operators to report on IUU fishing. In fact, it is being worked out to determine the reward amount in relation to the security of crimes detected.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 22120.024 – *Fees icw Capacity Building Programme (b) Training of new fishers*. Can I know from the hon. Minister, the training are carried out on how many days and how many new fishermen get there card after training?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, normally the training for new fishers, it is a 6-weeks training but normally for active fisherman who don't have Fisherman Card but are active fisherman, for these categories, we have put in two categories, people have only 8 days of training.

The Chairperson: Thank you for the information. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22900.030 – *Safety and Security Equipment for Fishers (partly EU funded)*. There is a net decrease from Rs22 m. last year to Rs16 m. this year and further decreasing to Rs9 m. the following year. May I know the reason for the decrease in the budgetary amount?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, this is long awaited equipment with regard to security and safety of our fishers. It is for the provision of communication devices to be used by the artisanal registered fishers, those who are boat owners only. In fact, we launched 2 procurement exercises in March 2022 and 2023 which were unsuccessful but invitation to bids

were re-launched through advertising bidding in May 2024. In fact, we have given the opportunity to fishers to select two options, VHF radio or the personal locator beacon. So, from thereon, we have 949 fishers who are boat owners have been selected. 136 have not opted to receive this communication device because they are over 65 years old, maybe they intend to retire. A bid has been launched, has been extended with regard. Hopefully in 1 months' time we will be able to realise this important gear which is important for our offices.

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

Mr Doolub: Page 424.

The Chairperson: Sorry, we are on page 424, hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Vote Item 28225.008 – *Off Lagoon Fishing Scheme (b) Purchase of Semi-Industrial Fishing Boat*. May we know from the hon. Minister the number of cooperative societies who have benefitted from this scheme? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision made for grant of Rs6 m. per fishing vessel to fisherman cooperatives and Rs1 m. per fishing vessel to individual fishers. Amount disbursed for 2023-24, Rs2 m. in respect of fishing companies and Rs12 m. in respect of 2 cooperative societies.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 28212.003 – *Compensation to Artisanal Fishermen (Relinquish Cards)*. Rs13 m. was earmarked, can we know how much money was spent as compensation and represents how many artisanal fishermen?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, provision made for payment of compensation to registered fishers aged 65 and above who voluntarily return, this is a voluntary return of the fisherman card to the Ministry or transfer it to their heirs. In fact, there is still a total of 308 fishers aged 65 and above. The quantum has increase, it was originally 2022-23 first time Rs52,500 and then in 2023-24 it was Rs100,000 and for this time it will be Rs125,000. So, 19 fishers have retired and Rs1,852,500 has been disbursed in that respect.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Last question for page 424. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.031 – *Financial Assistance to Fishers for Purchase of Fishing Materials (Partly EU funded)*. Can the hon. Minister explain why there is an increase in the sum allocated for the next budget?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision for financial assistance has increased as follows –

- i) It is grant in respect of material for construction of basket traps which has increased from Rs5000 to Rs7500 per registered fisher;
- ii) Grant for purchase of hooks which has increased from Rs2500 to Rs3500 per registered fisher; and
- iii) Provision also made for grant payable to 400 new fishers to be trained during Financial Year 2024-25; and also
- iv) Provision also made for ice box, rain coat, life jacket, bail equip and other safety equipment to new registered fishers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 424, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 31112.009 – *Construction of Fish Landing Stations (a) Pointe aux Sables (b) Bain des Dames*, amounts of Rs18 m. and Rs16 m. were earmarked respectively last year. Could we know the status of this project?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, with regard to Pointe aux Sables, the project is being reviewed for the implementation of a modern integrated project comprising of a toilet block, ice making machine, fish market and parking space as the land over there is almost half an acre which is available at my Ministry where we can make a very good project instead of just fish landing station. With regard to Bain des Dames, my Ministry has received representation from one temple in Bain des Dames where we wanted to shift the fish landing so the project is being revamped to address these issues.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Page 425. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 31113.012 – *Dredging of Boat Passage – Mahebourg*. Can we know if finally we have managed to find a contractor to do the work? Since 2015 we have been promising the fishermen of Mahebourg.

The Chairperson: You want the status of the project?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Dredging of Boat Passage Mahebourg*. In fact, the project will be reviewed again in light of the upgrading of the Jetty at *Maison des Pecheurs*, I think the hon. Member is there. Which is expected to be completed in 10 to 15 days. No, let me explain Mr Chairperson.

In fact, the jetty over there, the modern jetty which has been constructed to the tune of Rs19 m..Being given that the new project is already over there. The project is being reviewed with regard to the dredging. So, provision will be made thereat for adequate space for officials to move at the new jetty. Moreover the aim for reviewing the dredging of boat passage project is also to avoid any damage. Because for the place from where they wanted to operate Rémy Ollier is not a fish landing, so this has to be reviewed and in fact, the costing was too much, we have to review. Anyway we are going to address it in consultation with the fishers of that region.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time Over! Sub-Head 19-202 – Certification of Seafood Products for Exports: Competent Authority, page 426. Thank you, so, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: One question on the fees, Item 22120.028 – *Fees for Laboratory Test*. Why is the budgeted amount going down from Rs2.5 m. to Rs500,000?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, normally when they export samples of fish feed, water and ice are collected from the operators and they are submitted to laboratories like QuantiLAB, MSB, SDS etc, as per requirement of the EU. But, this was being funded. I think that was an anomaly and now this is being paid by the operators themselves.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know to whom this is paid?

Mr Maudhoo: Sorry, Mr Chairperson, I will table it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 19-2 Fisheries (Rs450,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.48 p.m.)

Vote 20-1 Gender Equality and Family Welfare was called.

The Chairperson: We are starting at page 434 Sub-Head 20-101 – General. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: *21110.005 – Extra Assistance.* May we know to whom it is paid, please?

Mrs Koonjoo-Sahah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision is made for payment of salaries to 3 Advisers –

- 1) Adviser on legal matter: Mr Ramsewak. His contract has been renewed annually with effect from 01 June 2020 with a monthly salary of Rs47,675. His contract is set to expire next year 31 May.
- 2) Adviser on Information Matters: Mr Ashwin Kanhye who has assumed duty on 01 March 2023 with a montly salary of Rs66,200. His contract has been renewed for a further period of 1 year valid until 28 February 2025.
- 3) Adviser on Public relation Matters: Mr Chandraev Seeranch. He assumed duty on 21 May 2024, draws a monthly salary of Rs25,525. His contract will expire next year on 20 May.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to page 435, hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (c) Study on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Republic of Mauritius.* Peut-on savoir de la ministre, qui est le consultant qui a été recruté et la date prévue pour la soumission du rapport ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Provision has been made for exactly the consultancy services. This is a project that has already started and there was a part payment made in last year's budget. The contract, Mr Chairperson, has been awarded to the consultancy firm Verde Frontier Solutions Ltd for an amount Rs1.5 m. The letter of award was issued on 06 December 2023. The inspection report has been submitted to my Ministry on 03 June this year. The assignment is of a duration of 180 days and is expected to be completed by the end of January 2025.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (d) Preparation of 9th Periodic Report - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. Could we know when will this report be ready to be submitted to the UN Committee?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the contract to the tune of Rs450,000 has been awarded to associate professor Dr. Ramtohul and Me. Soobramanien of the University of Mauritius. The contract was signed on 30 November 2023, the assignment is expected to be completed by September 2024 and the 9th CEDAW report is due for submission in November this year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, the same Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (a) Initial Report to 9th Report of the African Charter on Rights & Welfare of the Child*. Can the hon. Minister inform the house on the progress made and the increase in allocation on this Item?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for the consultancy services as has been said. The funding provided in last Financial Year was not sufficient and the cost estimate on the consultancy services was increased. There is a bidding exercise for the preparation of the Initial Report to 9th Report of the African Charter on Rights & Welfare of the Child but that is yet to be launched, Mr Chairperson. My Ministry has sought financial clearance for an increase in this cost estimates to approximately Rs4 m. So we can ensure an effective Completion of this report as it is crucial for filling our National and International Commitments.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Minister. Moving on to Sub-Head: 20-102 – Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming on page 436. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, M. le président, Item 22900.955 – *Gender Mainstreaming*. Alors, quatre *working groups* ont été identifié. *Can we know how the Ministry will implement the recommendation* avec la somme indiquée? Merci.

The Chairperson: This question is not admissible. So, we move on to hon. Ms J. Bérenger! As per Standing Orders, we are not going to discuss the administration and policy matters. Can you maybe reformulate your question, please?

Ms Anquetil: Alors concernant, Item 22900.955 – *Gender Mainstreaming*. Quatre *working groups* ont été identifié, est-ce qu'on peut savoir de la ministre comment cette somme sera dépensée? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I speak under your correction. I still believe that this is not admissible because this is implementation details. I would invite the hon. Member to give me notice of the question through a PQ. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900.014 – *Hospitality and Ceremonies (b) Gender/International Women's Day*. Un montant de R 2.3 millions a été alloué pour l'année passée. Est-ce que la ministre peut nous confirmer si ce montant était bien utilisé pour la journée internationale célébrée au SVICC?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I think this one is quite apparent. So, the entire Republic of Mauritius saw the celebration. So, yes it was well spent.

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

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.067 – *National Women's Council*. Can the hon. Minister inform why there is an increase in provision and for what purpose?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The increase, Mr Chairperson, is to cater for compensation of 176 employees and resource persons on a sessional basis.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 22900.014 – *Hospitality and Ceremonies (b) Gender/International Women's Day*. Can I know from the hon. Minister if she can table a list, detailed breakdown of how the fund was spent?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I did not quite catch what the hon. Member wanted me to table.

Mr Juman: Can the hon. Minister table a breakdown of the expenses with regard to the events.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, I can do so. I can give a bit of information right now if he wishes.

The Chairperson: Please.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: As I mentioned earlier on. The International Women's Day of this year was celebrated 25 February at SVICC Pailles; there was 3 outstanding women entrepreneur who were conferred with the National Women Entrepreneur award 2024. The first cash prize was Rs100,000 to the grand winner. The first runner up obtained Rs75,000 and the second runner-up obtained Rs50,000. There was a clip that was launched on the occasion. There was a gender equality seal for the public sector competition that was launched on that occasion as well. There were some 10,000 women who attended the event. So, yes the other breakdown I will happily table.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you. Item 26313.066 – *National Women Entrepreneur Council (b) Programmes - Women Entrepreneurship*. There has been a decrease from Rs3 m. to Rs2 m., can we know why the decrease?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: This provision is made to cater for the training programme for women entrepreneurs. If you can just bear with me, I will pull out more details for you. I got a whole list of more than a thousand active women entrepreneurs and everything that they undertake in terms of courses. So, I can very gladly table that to the library, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under the same Item 26313.066 – *National Women Entrepreneur Council*. Can we have the composition of the Board and the name of the Chairperson together with his/her qualifications?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I have the entire composition of the Board over here. I do not have the annexes with the qualifications, the Chairperson being Mrs Francoise Marechal-Charlotte along with all the other members of that Board but I will happily table what I have in terms of composition and I will further *déposer les qualifications dés membres et de la présidente*.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 22900.903 – *Awareness Campaign*. Can we know what will be the theme that will be addressed under the awareness campaign for the year 2024-25? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is going to be announced in due time. How can I announce this in this budget right now?

The Chairperson: Thank you. I think we are not here to discuss about that. So, we move on to hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 28211.051 – *Women's Associations*. Can I have from the hon. Minister the list of beneficiaries?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Can I have the Item number again, Mr Chairperson, please?

Mr Juman: Item 28211.051 – *Women's Associations*.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: 61 or 51?

Mr Juman: 51.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: What is the question, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: The name of the Women's Association benefitting from this Rs2.6 m.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: There are 449 Women's Associations and I think it will be more advisable to table.

The Chairperson: You can table the information.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, I will.

The Chairperson: Moving on to page 437 Sub-Head 20-103 – Child Protection, Welfare and Development. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.912 – *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children (b) Residential Care Institutions for Children with Special Needs and Infants*. An amount of Rs10 m. is earmarked. May we have more details from the Minister?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there is an increase in the provision because we are having 3 new RCIS under management services. Currently, all our RCIS are operating at fairly full capacity and we have made provision. The Minister of Finance has kindly made provisions for 3 new RCIS to be located and secured to adapt to RCIS.

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

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 27210.001 – *Foster Care*. There is an amount of Rs15 m. that is budgeted. So, may I know from the hon. Minister, the number of foster families and the number of children that are placed under foster care?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this allowance as rightly mentioned is payable to foster parents and it has been revised and as at May 2024 this year, we have a total of 80 foster families/foster parents who are taking care of 97 of our foster children.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 26313.053 – *National Children's Council (a) Operation Costs*. There is an increase in operation cost for this budget. Can we know the reason for the increase in operation cost?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the increase is to supplement compensation of 173 employees which come up to Rs47 m. and an operation cost of Rs4 m.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys - Consultancy Services for Reform in Child Services*. Peut-on savoir de la ministre, quelle consultant qui a été sélectionné, quel est le délai prévu pour la soumission du rapport? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: This exercise, Mr Chairperson, could not be carried out in the last Financial Year due to insufficient fund and the wake of the implementation of the Children's Act of 2020. Provision has been made for the consultancy services to undertake a review and revamping of the child services and the Ministry has launched a procurement exercise where only one responsive bidder has quoted an amount of Rs3.7 m. and in view of the nature of the study and to be able to attract more interested bidders, financial clearance has been sought in March this year to review the consultancy fees to an amount around Rs4 m. over a period of 2 years which is in line with the prevailing market rates for such an in-depth and comprehensive study for reforming child services.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.050 – *National Adoption Council*. May we know how many adoptions have been considered by this council, please?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Number of potential adoptive parents waiting for child referral as at April this year, Mr Chairperson, is 24. Number of application for adoption received from January of this year to April is 7 and that's about what I have in terms of data.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 22900.912 – *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children (a) Long Term Care Institution*. Can we know how many children are in the long term care institution?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I do not actually have it segregated in terms of long term care institution/ residential care Institution. What I can share with the House and the hon. Member is that we have a total number of 409 residents being cared for.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Moving on to page 438. Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 31112.428 – *Upgrading of Creativity Centre at Mahebourg*. Can we know the nature and status of this project and who is the contractor?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The project value of the upgrading works has been estimated at Rs13 m. for an implementation over a 3 year period and the Creativity Centre at Mahebourg, Mr Chairperson, requires a complete renovation of the fire alarm system and electrical wiring. The project will be undertaken under the framework agreement of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community development. Funding will be provided in a phase-wise manner, amount provided last year was too low and the complete electrical rewiring and the fire alarm could not be undertaken. Work is ongoing.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over. Sub-Head 20-104 – Family Welfare and Protection from Gender-Based Violence. We are on page 438. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys - Prevalence of GBV in Mauritius*. Est-ce qu'on pourrait avoir plus de details?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, in fact, the provision is for a quantitative survey of prevalence of GBV. The Ministry is undertaking to have a comprehensive quantitative survey to understand the prevalence on the dynamics of GBV in the country. Enumeration areas and maps have been sought from Statistics Mauritius, they have already been received. In July, there have been working sessions to distribute the enumeration areas, Statistics Mauritius has been approached to conduct the survey; it has not been very conclusive. So, we are looking ahead to have a facilitator for the survey, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Uteem

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children's Solidarity Programme (c) Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS)*. May I know from the hon. Minister, the total cost of that Dovis programme and whether it is fully operational now?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: DOVIS, just for the information of the House is a computerised system for the registration of reported cases of domestic violence. It is used as a case management tool. It is also connected for monitoring of cases received through the mobile

application L'ESPOIR, the hotline 139 and whether it is fully functional, yes it is directly connected to the Police Command Centre.

I might have gotten that appellation wrong. The Central Informatics Bureau has been requested to provide a project manager. So, for the creation and upgrading of DOVIS into a harmonised data collection platform, central data repository. It is fully operational, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Ramful: Can the hon. Minister tell us the number of domestic violence cases that has been reported for the last Financial Year?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Total number of calls received from July last year to May this year is 8017.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mr Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children's Solidarity Programme (a)*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, how many male victims she has and what are the facilities available for them?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, we are very thankful for the announcement made by the Minister of Finance in this year's budget for the provision of a one-off financial assistance of Rs5000 to victims of DV under the Survival Support Scheme which is what explains the increase in the provision. I don't see any male victims in my data. I see women and children. I will try to get the information.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Last question, hon. Ms J. Bérenger !

Ms J. Bérenger: Under the same Item 22900.908 – (k) *Sensitisation Programme to cope with Climate Change*. There is an allocated amount of Rs500,000. Peut-on savoir en quoi consiste le programme s'il vous plaît?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, there has been an amount of half a million earmarked and allocated to this Ministry for the organisation of programme on useful practices to cope with climate change and for this initiative the Ministry is going to partner with the other line Ministries such as the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Social Integration, just to

name a few so that we can implement the new programme which places focus on family values, that we can instill sustainable habits and climate awareness in families from a very early age.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. One last question from hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 22900.908 – (h) *Accompagnement des Familles Programme*. Peut-on savoir de la ministre combien des familles en ont bénéficié ? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Just to highlight, Mr Chairperson, provision is made for payment of training conducted by the Human Development Trust Organisation and the programme has already successfully been implemented at Pointe-aux-Piments, Pointe-aux- Sables and Cité Barkly. For the three regions, 45 participants were reached including but not limited to single mothers and parents from the regions.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time over!

Vote 20-1 Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Rs595,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(7.15 p.m.)

Vote 20-2 Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 442. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 26313.085 – *Extra-Budgetary Units Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*. Est-ce que les activités organisées ont été revues puisque celles existantes n’attirent pas grand monde ?

The Chairperson: I believe is a question relating to policy and administration which we are not going to entertain. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under the same Item 26313.085 – *Extra-Budgetary Units Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*. May I know from the hon. Minister, the composition of the committee that manages that fund?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, we have a Chairperson Mr Nazir Jhangi and we have quite a protracted list of members. I will table the composition, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to page 443. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Aquetil: Item 28221.022 – *Upgrading of Social Welfare Centres*. Quels sont les centres sociaux qui ont été rénovés?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision has been made for the upgrading of 10 centres and the refurbishment of the head office as well as the list of the 10 upgrading works to be carried out as follows –

1. Camp Chapelon;

2. Khoyratty;

3. Barlow;

4. Aryg;

5. Petit-Bois;

6. Hollyrood;

7. Camp Cavale ;

8. Cité Joachim ;

9. Gris-Gris, and

10. Residence Barkly.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Vote 20-2 Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities (Rs465,000,0000) was on question put, agreed to.

(7.18 p.m.)

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage was called.

The Chairperson: We shall start by Sub-Head 21-101: General on page 449. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know who are those who benefit from this allocation and the amount of their salary for each one of them?

Mr Teeluck: The list of Advisers –

- Adviser in Public Relation Matters – Mr Keijou
- Adviser in Artistic Matters – Mr Auckloo
- Adviser in Cultural Matters – Mr A. Seesaram
- Adviser on Information Matters – Mr A. Doorgachurn.

The pay packages, of course, are in line with the PRB.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We move to Sub-Head 21-102: Promotion of Arts and Culture. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22130 – Studies and Surveys. Can we know where does matter stands with regard to Development of Cultural Indicators?

Mr Teeluck: So, provision is being made for the organisation of two workshops with regard to the Development of Cultural Indicators project with the assistance of UNESCO and the objective of the Development of Cultural Indicators project is to collect appropriate artistic and cultural data. This project will be implemented with the support of UNESCO whereby experts will accompany officers of the Ministry and staff of Statistics Mauritius in the implementation of the project through capacity building and it is ongoing.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22030 – *Rent*. There is a huge decrease in rent. Can the hon. Minister give some explanation?

Mr Teeluck: The decrease in provision is due to the fact that funds have not been made available in the Financial Year 2024-2025 for the rental of a building for the setting up of an art gallery. In Financial Year 2023-24, a sum of Rs15 m. was made available for the renting of a building for that purpose. However, following a procurement exercise all bids received were found to be non-responsive. Funds have now been made available under the capital budget for project preparation to convert the ex-rice store of the ex-military hospital into an art gallery instead.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 22120 – *Restructuring Plan for Mauritius Society of Authors*. Can we know where matters stand on this project?

Mr Teeluck: Tender was launched on the 18 May 2023 through open international bidding. The only bid received was found to be significantly above the estimated cost and thus non-responsive. Since only Rs500,000 was available in the last financial year, tender could not be re-launched on the basis of the previous bid received. The term of reference have now been revised and reviewed for launching internationally in this financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same Item 22120 – *Fees – (a) Masterplan for Cultural Heritage District*. May we know whether the tender has already been launched for this?

Mr Teeluck: The terms of reference for the consultancy services is being prepared by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and will be launched at international level, in view of the specific expertise required in conservation of heritage buildings.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Chairperson, Page 450. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys – (a) Strategic Plan for the Arts and Creative Sector*. May we know why there is a decrease in the sum allocated and to whom will this sum be paid?

Mr Teeluck: The provision which has been made is for the development a strategic plan for the arts and creative sector after the implementation of the Development of Cultural

Indicators. So, the decrease in provision is as only part payment will be made for the preparation of the strategic plan in this financial year and the strategic plan will be worked out after the collection of artistic and cultural data.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 451, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 28210.014 – (c) *International Development Grant Scheme for Performing Artists*. May we know from the hon. Minister how many artists benefitted from the Artist Incubator Scheme for the current period?

Mr Teeluck: There are 9 beneficiaries. I can table the whole list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Same Item 28210.014 – (a) *Scheme for Concerts*. Can you give some more details on this item?

Mr Teeluck: During the last financial year, 23 beneficiaries have benefited from financial assistance to the tune of Rs1,000,496 834. I have the list. I can table the whole list.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Same Item 26313.100 – *Islamic Cultural Centre for Hajj Organisation*. Can I know from the hon. Minister if he can provide us of a breakdown with the total amount spent?

Mr Teeluck: Mr Chairperson, there is a whole breakdown. I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.106 – *Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust*. May we know where do matters stand in regard to the re-composition of the board for his trust?

Mr Teeluck: The trust will be reconstituted in due time, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 26313.116 – *Speaking Unions*. With regard to the Arabic Speaking Union, may I ask the hon. Minister to provide the composition of the Arabic Speaking Union together with their qualifications as far as Arabic language is concerned?

Mr Teeluck: The President is Mr Goolam Mohammed and I will circulate the whole list with all the requested information.

The Chairperson: Last question for page 451. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 451, Item 22900.018 – *Hiring of Services for Events*. Will the hon. Minister table a list of all those service providers for different events herein mentioned?

Mr Teeluck: Just for information, Mr Chairperson, for Financial Year 2023-2024 an amount of around Rs2.7 m. has been disbursed to 92 beneficiaries if we are referring to hiring of services for events but, of course, I will provide the full details.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 452, Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 31112.420 – *Upgrading of Theatres*. Can we know from the hon. Minister which theatre shall be upgraded?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made to cater for refurbishment of fire hose, piping system, waterproofing and overholding of toilet blocks at ground level and other ancillary works for upgrading of Serge Constantin Theatre and Pointe Canon Open Air Theatre and for the purchase of 2 heavy duty extractors in the carpentry workshop at the Serge Constantin Theatre.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31112.038 – *Setting up of Galerie d'Arts Nationale (Project Preparation)*. May we know if we are speaking of the same project within the ex-Rice Store? And, if so, can the minister indicate where stands in regard to the restoration of this building for matter which there has already been an *appel d'offre*?

Mr Teeluck: We are talking of the ex-rice store of the ex-military hospital near Apravasi Ghat. This will be part of the whole preparation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31112.060 – *Construction of Cultural Centres (Project Preparation)*. I see that there is only an amount of Rs5 m. that has been budgeted. So, may I know from this Rs5 m. will be used for which cultural centre?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made for project reparation with respect to construction of 3 cultural centres –The Mauritius Tamil Cutural Centre Trust, Hindi Speaking Union, and Urdu Speaking Union at Côte d'Or. The land at Côte d'Or has already been identified and each parastatal body and approved by the respective boards. The land has not yet been vested in these institutions. Once the land is vested, the project coordinator of the Ministry will be requested to work on the designs and thereon preparation of the bid documents and all.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 452, Item 31112.059 – *Construction of National Arts Centre*. Hon. Minister, are we talking of the construction of National Art Centre at Réunion Maurel, and what is the status of this project so far?

Mr Teeluck: The project will be a designed and built project and will include a recording studio whereby emerging artists will be given mentoring for the production of their music, but also an amphitheatre and a multi-purpose hall. In Financial Year 2023-2024, 5 tender exercises have been launched. The 5th procurement exercise is in progress, hopefully it is responsive and we have successful bid. For the 4 procurement exercises launched earlier, non-responsive bids have been received thus necessitating re-launching.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 453, Sub-Head 21-103: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.030 – *Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund*. May we know the qualifications of the Chairperson and the salary package?

Mr Teeluck: The Chairperson of the Trust is M. Jean Claude Jance and the Director is Dr. Mrs Tamby Lai. I also have the list of all the members and their qualifications. I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 26313.039 – *Mauritius Museums Council*. Can I know from the hon. Minister the name of the Chairperson, qualification, pay package and also the number of visitors for the last year?

Mr Teeluck: The Chairperson is Mr S. Daltummon appointed on 06 August 2020, I don't have his qualifications in information provided but I will make sure it is tabled.

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

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 28211.073 – *Classified Museums*. Can the hon. Minister table the list of the classified museums, please?

Mr Teeluck: Classified Museums –

- Musée de la Petite Collection
- Jewish Detainees Museum
- Musée de la Photographie
- Sir Jean Moulin Mémorial Centre

These are the four classified museums.

The Chairperson: Page 454, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 31113.005 – *Erection of Monuments*. Can we have some details about this?

Mr Teeluck: Provision was made for the erection of the statue of late Sir Anerood Jugnauth at L'Esplanade Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Port-Louis, which has been completed.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We are now on page 454, hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 26323.039 – (a) *Renovation of National History Museum, Mahebourg (Project Preparation)*. Can we have some details from the hon. Minister, please?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made for the payment of fees to the team of MNICD for project preparation. There is a decrease in provision as the project preparation for the renovation of the National History Museum will be handled in-house by the officers of the MNICD. Previous consultancy services awardee to Pixel Creation Ltd no longer meet the requirement.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Item 26323.030 – *Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund (a) Upgrading of Trou Chenilles Trail*. Le Ministre, peut-il nous fournir les détails sur les *timeframe* des travaux ? Merci.

Mr Teeluck: The project comprises the upgrading and rehabilitation of two sites of intervention, namely the stabilisation of the slope on Le Morne Brabant Mountain that was affected by landslide in January 2023, and the Trou Chenilles Trail at the foot of Le Morne Brabant Mountain affected by erosion as a result of climate change. Funds allocated in this financial year will be utilised to kick-start the works.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26323.039 – *Mauritius Museums Council 10,000 5,000 7,000 2,000 – (a) Renovation of National History Museum, Mahebourg (Project Preparation)*. Can we know the time-frame for the completion of this project preparation and if the hon. Minister has taken cognizance of the state of the museum for which a sum of at least Rs25 m. has been asked by the authority for the renovation?

Mr Teeluck: Mr Chairperson, I have just replied to the question. Of course, as I said, the project preparation will be handled in-house by MNICD officers. We are in discussion presently with them. The time-frame for the completion, including the project preparation, is estimated to 3 years as from now.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over!

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage (Rs680,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(7.37 p.m.)

Vote 22-1 Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.

The Chairperson: We shall proceed from Sub-Head 22-101: General on page 462. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. *Item 21110.004 –Allowances.* There is a two-fold increase in the amount. Can we know to whom these fees are being paid and will be paid and for what purpose?

Dr. Chukowry: Increase in provision is due to full time posting of Minister and higher number of staff entitled for allowances payable as per PRB. Also provision is made for acting and responsibility allowance for supporting staff, ad-hoc and responsibility allowance for the Confidential Secretary to the Minister, hospitality and drivers allowance to the Permanent Secretary and allowances to Minister.

The Chairperson: Page 462, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item *21110.005 – Extra Assistance.* There is an increase from Rs1.2 m. to Rs2.5 m. May we know to whom that extra assistance is being paid and how much is being paid?

Dr. Chukowry: This increase in provision is to cater for the full year salary of Senior Adviser and 1 PRO, and provision is made for the payment of basic salary, salary compensation, duty remission, car allowance, travelling allowance, end-of-year bonus and refund of annual leave as per PRB to 3 Advisers as follows –

- Mr Jean-Francois Jerome Cossigny – Adviser on Information Matters;
- Mr Dolesh Dosoruth – Senior Adviser, and
- Mr F. Muhammed Siddique – Public Relations Officer.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item *22030 – Rent.* We are asked to vote an amount of Rs18 m., can we know the name of the owner of the building?

Dr. Chukowry: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the owner is SICOM.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22030 – *Rent*. We are asked to vote for Rs18 m. Last year the rent was around Rs14 m., can we know the reason of the Rs4 m. increase?

Dr. Chukowry: As provision was previously made under Sub-Head 22-102 – Commerce and Trade Development. Provision is made for the payment of rent as follows – rent of office space at Sicom Tower Ebene, and also rental of one parking slot at the National Museum of Port-Louis.

Mr Uteem: The question was very simple. Why is there an increase? Are you renting more space or is there an increase in the rental amount claimed by the landlord?

Dr. Chukowry: It also includes additional office space at the Sicom Tower on the first floor.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Moving on to Sub-Head 22-102: Commerce and Trade Development, we are on page 463. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*. Can you explain why there is an increase in the sum allocated for the next budget?

Dr. Chukowry: Yes. Provision is made for the payment of paper and materials, also printing and stationery, books and periodicals, notes for publications. The increase in provision is due to a general rise in cost of printing materials and toners and also increases in the Ministries' activities.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms. Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 21111.200 – *Staff Welfare*. May we know from the hon. Minister what is done for the staff welfare?

Dr. Chukowry: Provision is made for staff welfare events, for example, team building.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 22030 – *Rent*. I noticed a net decrease from Rs14 m. to Rs50,000. May we know the reason?

Dr. Chukowry: Provision is made for the rental of vehicles. Fees payable to the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority for the hiring of lorries by the Legal Metrology Service for the verification of weighbridges only in cases of emergency that is lorry breakdown and maintenance. The decrease in provision because rental of office space at Sicom and rental of one parking space in Port-Louis has now been moved under Sub-Head 22-101: General.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.001 – *Basic Salary*. And I would like to refer to page 466, under Human Resources. According to the Human Resources Section, 25 Management Support Officers will be recruited. Can we know what are the qualifications required for these posts, stating whether they will be publicly advertised?

The Chairperson: This question cannot be entertained. We move on to page 464. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22170 – *Travelling within the Republic*. Can I know why there is such an increase in the sum allocated and how many visits has the ministry done to Rodrigues?

Dr. Chukowry: Increase in provision is due to increase in Ministry's activities in Rodrigues for capacity building and initiative with relevant commissions thereat and enforcement of consumer protection measures. Provision is made for the payment of airfares and accommodation costs for official visit to Rodrigues. Up to now, 2 visits have been effected to Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 26313.008 – *Extra-Budgetary Units Competition Commission*. There is an amount of Rs53 m. earmarked. May I know from the hon. Minister the name and salary packages of the Chairperson, Commissioners and Executive Director of that commission?

Dr. Chukowry: You have –

1. Chairperson : Mr Mahmad Aleem Bocus – Rs119,500;
2. Commissioner: Mrs Vedwanee .Bikhoo – Rs66,050;
3. Commissioner: Mrs Sharda Dindoyal – Rs66,050;
4. Commissioner: Mr Micheal Lennon – Rs66,050, and
5. Executive Director: Deshmuk Kowlessur – Rs294,220.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over! Sub-Head 22-103: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item *21110.001 – Basic Salary*. May I know the number of contraventions taken by officers of the Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance Unit?

Dr. Chukowry: Concerning the Consumer Affairs Unit: 6200 inspections at trade premises were carried out to ensure compliance with existing regulations. 1520 contraventions, including fixed penalty notices, have been issued to defaulters and 382 samples were analysed for product safety, including toys, iron bars and electrical products.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item *22010 – Cost of Utilities*. There is an increase from Rs500,000 to more than Rs2 m. this year, can we have some explanation on that?

Dr. Chukowry: Provision is made to cater for electricity and water charges and telephone expenses for the head office at Sicom Tower. Increase in provision is based on revised estimates and current expenditure and is due to the inclusion of a new provision for the hiring of appropriate call centre services to enhance present support for Ministry's hotline.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 465. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item *22900 – Other Goods and Services*. May we have a breakdown of the other goods and services?

Dr. Chukowry: Provision for the payment of uniforms for drivers and office auxiliaries, also for hospitality and ceremonies, miscellaneous expenses, awareness campaigns for consumer

protection. And provision is made to cater for the holding of awareness and sensitisation campaigns.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Item 22120 – *Fees*. Can we have the details, please?

Dr Chukowry: Payment of revised fees to members of the Price Observatory Committee as follows –

- Monthly fees to Chairperson: Rs1,500 per sitting up to a maximum of Rs4,500 a month;
- Monthly fees to member; Rs125 per sitting up to a maximum of Rs3,375 a month;
- Monthly fees to secretary: Rs825 per sitting up to a maximum of Rs2,475 a month, and
- Travelling expenses.

Fees for training for officers of the Consumer Affairs cadre and fees for parking coupons used in respect site visits. Also, fees for laboratory test of alleged substandard goods.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Vote 22-1 Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs227,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

(7.52 p.m.)

Vote 23-1 Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms was called.

The Chairperson: We shall start at Sub-Head 23-101: General. Page 471. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 471 Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Two questions: why this drop from Rs1.9 to Rs1.8 and this amount is payable to whom and what are their qualifications and salary?

The Chairperson: These are 3 questions. Hon. Minister!

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made for the payment salaries to 2 Advisers, namely

-
- 1. Mr Khemraj Seddur -Adviser on Information Matters
- 2. Mr Teeluck Rai Kallychurn - Adviser on Human Resource Administration and Institutional Reforms, contract for one year.

And the payment of the allowances for other two Advisers, namely –

- 1. Mr Adeep Chuckowry - Adviser on Public Relation Matters, temporary transfer from initial period of 1 year as from 26.12.23
- 2. Mr Ravi Jaunky – Adviser on Administrative Reforms, temporary transfer from initial period of 1 year as from 02.02.24

Salary is aligned as per PRB Report.

The Chairperson: Page 472, Hon Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Item 31112.058 – *Construction of Civil Service College*. Can the hon. Minister state the progress of this project?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision made to cater for the construction of the Civil Service College Mauritius at Le Réduit Triangle. The contract was awarded on 09 November 2021, and the contract was awarded to Tayleamay and Sons Enterprise Ltd. The expected date of completion is mid-August 2024. The initial expected date of completion was mid-June 2023, however, due to adverse weather conditions, continuous delay in shipment of materials from overseas, late supply of electricity on-site and work permit issues for foreign labourers leading to a shortage of manpower on site. The completion date has now been scheduled for mid-August 2024.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22030 – *Rent*. There is an increase for the amount in rent.

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision is made to meet the cost of rental facilities for activities to be undertaken by my Ministry, such as workshops, seminars and audio-visual facilities. The Ministry is currently renting ground floor for Level 2, Level 3 up to 12 and 2 commercial spaces of a total of 5,574 square metres at Sicom Building Tower 2 for a monthly rent of around Rs2 m. including VAT. 107 square metres at NPF Building to operate the correspondence services at the cost of Rs40,000 per month exclusive of VAT. The increase in rent is in line with the revision which is done every 3 years as per the lease agreement based on Consumer Price Index published in the official journal. The rental payable was revised in October 2023. Security and cleaning services are not included.

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

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 472 Item 31122.802 –*Acquisition of IT equipment*. May know why there has been a drop by Rs1 m. and who is the supplier this equipment?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made for the purchase of heavy duty printers and photocopiers for several section of my Ministry.

The Chairperson: Sub-Head 23-102: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service. Page 473. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22900.993 – *Other Goods and Services –Expenses i.c.w Sandbox Framework*. An amount of Rs2 m. was provided last year and is provided for this year. May I know from the hon. Minister what is this expense for Sandbox Framework for?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made to implement 3 sandbox projects for financial year 2024-2025 as it is set below –

- Development of mobile application for public officers;
- Development of SMS gateway alert system for the Ministry of Labour, and
- Development of a software application design to manage students discipline including tracking of students' movement, reporting to parents and the supporting students' distress call for the Ministry of Education.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 26210.189 – *Contribution to International Organisations African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)*. Can the hon. Minister give information on this association any benefit we derived from?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made for the payment of the membership fee for the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM). It is a contribution to the International organisation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 473. Item 22120 – *Fees*. There has been a mug drop from Rs4 m. to RS1.5 m. why is it so, and to whom will these fees be paid?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made for the payment to the Mauritius Standard Bureau for ISO Certification of the division of my Ministry. Training of Public officers on the implementation of ISO Certification, consultancy for the review of the Performance Management Process (PMS). The decrease in provision is due to the reduction in fee to the consultant.

The Chairperson: Sub-Head 23-103: Capacity Building in the Civil Service. Page 474. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 22120.039 – *Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servants*. There is an increase in the budgeted amount from Rs12.8 m. to Rs14.8 m. May I know from the hon. Minister who conduct these Professional Development Training?

Dr. Ramdhany: The increase in the provision is to cater for the increase in training to be dispensed to the public officers following operational of the new campus of the Civil Service College, whereby there is a director and members.

The Chairperson: Sub-Head 23-104: Human Resource Management in the Civil Service. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 26313.075 – *Extra-Budgetary Units Public Officers' Welfare Council*. May we have the composition of the Council, please?

Dr. Ramdhany: Present composition of the POWC Board. I can table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode. Page 474.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*. Can the hon. Minister provide a breakdown of expenses under this item?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision has been made for the payment of allowances such as the acting allowances, responsibility allowances, ad-hoc allowance, duty remission allowance, and other allowances. The present provision is based on current trend of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Page 475, under same Sub-Head 23-104, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May we have more details regarding Item 31132.130 – *E-Scheme of Service* for which Rs5 m. has been earmarked?

Dr. Ramdhany: The E-Scheme of Service, Mr Chairperson, has been developed and implemented on a pilot basis in five Ministries and Departments. The E-Scheme of Service is a platform whereby draft schemes of services are processed electronically and consultation with different stakeholders is held online. This ensures consistency and uniformity in the drafting of these documents while improving timeliness and enabling the prompt prescription of scheme of service. Based on the positive feedback received from the users of the system, the E-Scheme of Service will be extended throughout the public service.

The Chairperson: Very good, thank you. Sub-Head 23-105: Occupational Safety and Health, on page 475, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 22900.934 – *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*, Rs4.5 m. budgeted last year and the same figure for this year. May we have some details as to what are the projects to enhance the work environment in the Civil Service?

Dr. Ramdhany: Mr Chairperson, provision made to cater for projects funded by the Ministry to improve the work environment in Ministries and Departments. As of 10 June 2024, some 201 projects have been funded under the EWEP Scheme. I can table the list.

The Chairperson: Yes, please. Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 475, Item 22120 – *Fees*. There has been an increase from Rs900,000 to Rs1,155,000 for this year. May we know how will these be allocated?

Dr. Ramdhany: Provision made for training of the public officers on occupational safety matters in compliance with the safety and health norms of the OSH Act. This provision has been increased to cater for more training sessions, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Very good, thank you. Hon. Minister!

Vote 23-1 Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (Rs487,000,000) was, on question put, and agreed to.

(8.06 p.m.)

Vote 24-1 Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives was called.

The Chairperson: We are...

(Interruptions)

Order!

We are on Sub-Head 24-101: General and we will start from 482. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have the list of the Advisers and the amount paid to them?

Ms Ramyad: Provision made for remuneration on contract of Advisers. As at date, there are Advisers at the SME Division.

The Chairperson: Page 483, hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (COMESA Funded)*, can you give some more details and the progress of work?

Ms Ramyad: It is provision for fees to members of boards and committees –

- DBC;

- BEC;
- Audit Committee;
- Training of staff.

Fees to consultants are unfunded as payment has already been made to consultants by COMESA.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *31132.117 – Central SME Database*, there was a project value of Rs6 m. May we know the status of this project?

Ms Ramyad: Amount of Rs3 m. has been earmarked for the financial year and for the payment at date, so you would want to know that the consultant submitted the final report in February 2024 and bids for the supply customisation, installation and post-go-live support of an integrated IT system for SMEs was launched on 29 March 2024. The bids are currently on evaluation stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to Sub-Head 24-102: Industrial Development on page 483. Page 484, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item *26313.011 – Academy of Design and Innovation*, there is an increase in the budget for the Academy of Design and Innovation. May we know from the hon. Minister why the increase?

Ms Ramyad: Increase in provision is mainly due to –

- (i) Recruitments that are essential to the growth and development of the ADI;
- (ii) The annual increments payable to staff on permanent and pensionable establishment in January 2024;
- (iii) Enhance pending in regard to events and marketing, advertising, rebranding, PR and the like in order to position the Academy so that it has a better chance of achieving its set objectives;
- (iv) For the yearly lease rentals and contributions towards infrastructural works and maintenance facilities in regard to Côte d'Or plot.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Capital Expenditure, Item 26323.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*, can the hon. Minister explain why they increased the grant for the Mauritius Standards Bureau?

Ms Ramyad: Yes, the increase is to cater for expenditure pertaining to the following –

- i. The provision for the Bureau to act pursuant to Article 10 of the World Trade Organisation Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement as the enquiry point for Mauritius with the objective of answering reasonable enquiries from other Member States to the Agreement, including on any adopted or proposed technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures;
- ii. To empower the Mauritius Standards Bureau to conduct other activities such as testing, certification and inspections.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the same Item 26323.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Mauritius Standards Bureau has now a General Manager?

Ms Ramyad: Yes.

Mr Uteem: So, what is the name of the person?

Ms Ramyad: Yes, the MSB has a Director for the day-to-day management. It is Mrs Loveetah Chummun Bhujohory who was appointed as from 10 October 2023 and the qualifications as well you have asked?

The Chairperson: No. Question was not asked about that, thank you. We are now on page 485, Sub-Head 24-103: Small and Medium Enterprises Development. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Grants, Item 26313.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd*, can the hon. Minister table the names of the Chairperson, Directors and Executive Officer of the SME Mauritius Ltd?

Ms Ramyad: Yes, I will table the composition of the Board and the CEO.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We are now at Sub-Head 24-104: Cooperatives Development, page 485. Page 486, under the same Sub-Head, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 26313.061 - *National Cooperative College*, may we know the status of this project? What stage has it reached?

Ms Ramyad: It's functional. It has for this year had 1,800 participants and the composition of the board is –

- The Chairperson - Mr Boodhoo;
- The Director - Mr Coonjobeeharry.

There are 9 staffs. The courses dispensed by the NCC are –

- Certificate in Co-operative Management;
- Diploma in Co-operative Business Management, and
- Tailor-made Non-award courses for co-operatives.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 24-1 Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Rs551,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Estimates 2024-2025 & Indicative Estimates 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 were considered and agreed to.

The Appropriation (2024-2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024) was considered and agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, Mr Speaker will now resume the Chair. So, I would wish to thank you all for your cooperation and support in the smooth conduct of this event.

At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, tonight it's late, next time, it would be early.

Mr S. Mohamed: You are late! I was waiting for you!

Mr Speaker: I am waiting for you next time! Hon. Deputy Chairperson of Committees!

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees reported accordingly.

The Deputy Chairperson of Committees: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to report to the House that the Estimates 2024-2025 & Indicative Estimates 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 and the Appropriation (2024-2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024) have passed the Committee of Supply without amendment.

Mr Speaker: Adjournment of the House!

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Toussaint seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned. So, no adjournment matter! So, let's call it a day and a night!

At 8.19 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 11.30 a.m.