



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2026

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THE CABINET

(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands, Attorney General
Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, GCSK	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries
Hon. Govindranath Gunness	Minister of National Infrastructure
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC	Attorney-General
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun	Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning
Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohul	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Wochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody, GOSK
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena, CSK
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MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 03 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 31 March 2026

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Office of the President

The Annual Report 2025 of the National Human Rights Commission.

B. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry of Finance

Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of The National Research and Innovation Institute Bill (No. IV of 2026). (In Original)
- (b) The Compliance Audit Report on the Social Integration and Empowerment of Vulnerable Households – Sustainable Development Goal 1: No Poverty - Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (March 2026).
(In Original)

C. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

The Annual Report 2024/2025 for the Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning.

D. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 32 of 2026)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 33 of 2026)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 34 of 2026)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 35 of 2026)

E. Ministry of Local Government

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the District Council of Savanne for the year ended 30 June 2024. (In Original)

PMO & MOF – SENIOR ADVISERS & ADVISERS – DEC 2024-MARCH 2026

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance respectively, he will state –

- (a) the names, position, qualifications and salaries of the Senior Advisers and Advisers appointed thereat, since December 2024 to date, indicating the board of any parastatal body or Government-owned company on which they are members and the allowances drawn, and
- (b) whether there are other nominees attached to the said offices.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I was just looking through the list, perhaps it might be better if I table the information requested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, unless you want me to read it. It's a long list. Not so many people, but the qualifications and all this. I will lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

In relation to membership of Boards of parastatal bodies or Government-owned companies, there are currently only two Advisers who are appointed in that capacity. One is Mr Rakesh Bhuckory, Chief of Staff/Senior Adviser; he is also serving as Director of the Economic Development Board, drawing a monthly board fee of Rs40,000 since 31 March 2025, and also, Dr. Takesh Luckho as Chairperson of the State Trading Corporation, drawing an all-inclusive monthly allowance of Rs44,250, since 03 February 2025.

Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the statement I made to the House at our Sitting on 25 June 2025 wherein I pointed out, that except in a couple of cases, where Advisers are serving on Boards and Committees, I have given strict instructions not to have any other Adviser to serve on Boards and Committees, that is, from 25 June 2025. These two Advisers were appointed before that date.

Madam Speaker, it would be apposite for me to explain the rationale of this decision. The House will recall that under the former Government, Advisers were allowed to serve on numerous Boards where they were earning revenues which were very often much higher than their salaries.

Let me give you a few examples where Advisers were authorised to make such a gross abuse of their membership on Boards and Committees –

- (i) Mr Ballah, who was drawing a salary of Rs163,250 as Special Adviser, was also appointed as Chairperson/Director of –
- Mauritius Revenue Authority;
 - SBM (Bank Holdings) Ltd;
 - Mauritius Telecom;
 - Multi-Carrier (Mauritius) Ltd;
 - Metro Express Ltd;
 - SBM Africa Holdings Ltd;
 - SBM Bank (Kenya) Limited (paid in US dollars, not rupees);
 - Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd, and
 - Rodrigues Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd.

I can give you many other examples, Madam Speaker.

- (ii) Mr Prakash Maunthrooa, Special Adviser, who was drawing Rs132,000 per month and Rs20,000 as extra duty allowance, was also Chairperson of –
- Airports of Mauritius Co Ltd;
 - Airport Terminal Operations Ltd, and
 - Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd.

He was also a member of numerous Boards and Committees including –

- 9 committees of SBM Holdings Ltd;
- State Insurance Company of Mauritius Ltd (SICOM) and two of its sub-committees;
- Air Mauritius Ltd;
- Air Mauritius Holdings Ltd;
- Airmate Ltd, and

- Mauritius Helicopter Ltd.
- (iii) There is Mr Kreedeo Bheekharry, Special Adviser, who was drawing a salary of Rs119,500. He was also appointed on the Board of the following –
- Gambling Regulatory Authority;
 - Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd;
 - Rodrigues Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd;
 - Airport of Rodrigues Ltd, and
 - Pointe Coton Resort Hotel Co. Ltd;
 - Metro Express Ltd.

I could go on and on, Madam Speaker, and refer to many other such cases.

I should also highlight that Mr Prakash Maunthrooa, Special Adviser, who sat on 14 Boards and 7 Committees, drew Rs15 million between the period January 2015 to November 2024. Rs15 million!

An hon. Member: *Ena beze la!*

The Prime Minister: Mr Nayen Koomar Ballah, Special Adviser, sat on 9 Boards and drew a total of Rs7.5 million during period February 2023 to November 2024.

Mr Kreedeo Beekharry, Senior Adviser, sat on 6 Boards and 3 Committees and he drew a total of Rs16 million from March 2015 to November 2025.

Mr Ken Arian, Senior Adviser, sat on 7 Boards and 4 Committees and he drew a total of Rs11.3 million during the period February 2018 to September 2021.

There are other names, I could keep going on.

May I also draw the attention of the House that under the former regime, there were 31 Senior Advisers/Advisers attached to the Prime Minister's Office.

Ms Anquetil: Quoi? 31!

The Prime Minister: And from 2015 to 2024, there were 14 attached to the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Jhummun: *Malgre sa li'nn koul pei la!*

The Prime Minister: And, Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to state that there are no other nominees attached to my Office.

Madam Speaker: Yes, your first supplementary!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the population wants to know what is happening now at the Prime Minister's Office; not what happened before.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Let him...

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned his Chief of Staff. Can we be informed what are his duties, Madam Speaker?

The Prime Minister: These are defined already, Madam Speaker, that is what a Chief of Staff does. He looks at... I can give you the details if you want but it will take time. His duties are –

- He has to provide clarification or insight into specific public projects;
- He is also involved in analytical, practical and problem solving in nature; in other words, to help initiatives forwarded by the Prime Minister's Office. And also, to adjust the needs and concerns of those affected, in other words also, people come and see him for other things.

Madam Speaker: Yes, second!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Madam Speaker, recently the Chief of Staff expressed himself in the press, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm if he was the subject of severe criticisms from the former Deputy Prime Minister and may we know what were the subjects of those criticisms?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: He was...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Chut!* Let the hon. Prime Minister reply, please!

The Prime Minister: He was subject to criticism from the former Deputy Prime Minister. Yes, he was. The former Deputy Prime Minister thought that he was on the EDB Board and that he was interfering in that Board.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister state if his Chief of Staff is, in fact, a member of the infamous *gang de 5* as expressed by the former Deputy Prime Minister?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: That, Madam Speaker, is a fiction of their imagination. There is no such gang. There are people whom I know, who have come to see me in my office. It does not mean they are working for me. I meet many people, including people who have worked very closely to me for the ten years, when people didn't even want to see me, were turning their backs; these people were there. So, I am not going to stop seeing them, but there is not any gang of 5 as you mentioned.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Your former Deputy Prime Minister mentioned that.

Madam Speaker: Don't talk while sitting.

(Interruptions)

Carry on, fourth question!

Mr Jhummun: *Li envi kone ki minis ti retourn Rs 5million...? Sa ki bisin koner.*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhummun!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether one, Mr Kumar Cahoolessur, is attached to his office and what are his duties?

The Prime Minister: Yes, he is a man who does a lot of work. He is very able to do a lot of things, but I do get difficulties with him, I must say. In fact, at one point, I did ask him to leave the office of PMO. And then, many people from the Party, actually asked me to be a bit kinder; there was no need to ask him to leave. So, I asked him to come back in a different position but again, he seems to be interfering in some things. I have asked him, again, to go somewhere else.

Madam Speaker: Fifth question.

Mr Lesjongard: It's your decision, hon. Prime Minister.

Hon. Prime Minister, can you inform the House whether, the former Deputy Prime Minister and a Minister informed you about a case where allegations of corruption were made against that Mr K.C.?

The Prime Minister: The former Deputy Prime Minister mentioned this to me. I did ask the Minister and he completely denied it. He said it was misunderstood. There was not a case of corruption but somebody came to see him to try to influence him on an enquiry on a government school and the enquiry is going on there.

Mr Lesjongard: The former Deputy Prime Minister stated that it was a case of corruption.

Madam Speaker: No, don't! Question! Question!

Mr Lesjongard: Now, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether, the Minister who went to complain to the former Deputy Prime Minister, is his Minister for Education, hon. Dr. Gungapersad?

Mr Jhummun: *Nou pe koz* qualification of advisers *la*.

The Prime Minister: ...whether the Minister complained to whom? I did not hear the question.

Madam Speaker: To the former Deputy Prime Minister. I don't know if you would know.

The Prime Minister: The Minister told me that it was misunderstood. There was somebody who came to see him in his office to try to influence him on something going on in the education sector. He threw him out and there is an enquiry going on in this.

Madam Speaker: Okay, that was more or less the same question.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, has the hon. Prime Minister found out from the hon. Minister as to why he reported the case of alleged corruption to the former Deputy Prime Minister and not to you, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: That you will have to ask him but I can say that...

Mr Lesjongard: You did not ask him?

Madam Speaker: Don't question from a sitting position!

The Prime Minister: I didn't ask him, but it is the former Deputy Prime Minister who actually called him and wanted to know something. He gave him the details about one school in the education sector and this is why he gave the answer. But he didn't say; he thinks he was misunderstood.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Let's move on. Next question!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether, the hon. Minister for Education made a statement to the Financial Crimes Commission about this case?

The Prime Minister: There is an enquiry already going on, Madam Speaker.

Mr Lesjongard: Did the hon. Prime Minister say that there is an ongoing enquiry by the Financial Crimes Commission?

The Prime Minister: No, not by the Financial Crimes Commission; by the police.

Mr Lesjongard: By the police.

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has informed the Financial Crimes Commission of this case?

The Prime Minister: Why do I have to inform the FCC if police enquiry is going on, not on the substance of what he is saying but on something else concerning the same person?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have given you a lot of leeway but your supplementary must be related to your main question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: It is related to the advisers at the ministry...!

Madam Speaker: Not quite! Not quite!

Try and be more, *plus pointu*.

Mr Lesjongard: I am, Madam Speaker.

The hon. Minister for Social Security expressed very serious concerns with regard to corruption, stating that it is worse than what the former Deputy Prime Minister stated. Will the hon. Prime Minister consider, since his office is concerned, reviewing all nominations made at the level of the PMO since both, that is, the former Deputy Prime Minister and the actual Minister for Social Security, targeted your office, hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I don't recall the hon. Minister for Social Security targeting my office. We are being very stringent, Madam Speaker. We said that there will be zero tolerance on corruption. Even if it is nothing compared to what happened during the MSM regime, but still, we have to try to weed out those who are corrupt.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I think your sixth question, maybe.

Mr Lesjongard: I will be completing, Madam Speaker.

The hon. Prime Minister has stated several times that our economy will be severely affected due to war and also due to the *trou de R 10 milliards*. And during, Madam Speaker, my last two PNQs, he refused, when I put the question to him, to revert back to allocations that were being given to workers of this country. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, the salaries of Advisers, Senior Advisers and, also, maybe Members of this House, will be reduced due to the negative effects of the war on our economy, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: I must tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition that – he might not be aware – we have not increased the salary since quite a while. Not only that, we have given the PRB. There are anomalies now that are arising even with the Members of Parliament. There are anomalies, which I think, should be corrected. But you must realise that the Advisers are not getting anything. I just mentioned a few, like what they were getting before. They were getting fortunes, millions; it is not the case anymore.

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Prime Minister confirmed that some persons, who are not Advisers, have regular access to his office. Can he ...

(Interruptions)

That is what he said!

Madam Speaker: But that is not related to the ...

Mr Lesjongard: My question, Madam Speaker, can he confirm whether these persons are allowed to give instructions to public officers?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I don't know who he is referring to but I can tell you...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, he is referring to your answer earlier on, that people come and see you. That's all.

The Prime Minister: Yes, people can come and see me as much as they want, if I have time.

The Prime Minister: But let me reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition – maybe he does not know me very well – I take my own decisions.

Mr Lesjongard: Let me give an example, Madam Speaker. For example, there was one Mr K.C., the same Mr K.C., who had access to areas reserved for VVIPs – I will give you an example – at the receptorium of the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport during the arrival ceremony of the President of Seychelles.

The Prime Minister: I am trying to work out who is K.C. I think I have guessed who it is.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Kumar Cahoolessur!

The Prime Minister: Yes, but he works in my office. He is allowed to come there.

Mr Lesjongard: So, he works in your office?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: He is paid for that, also, for working in your office?

The Prime Minister: Of course. He is one of the advisers in my office.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You did not know?

Mr Lesjongard: I am done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You have finished. Okay, thank you.

B/149! Yes.

**PALMAR PUBLIC BEACH – INCIDENTS OF 25 JAN 2026 – POLICE
INTERVENTION**

(No. B/149) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the incidents of 25 January 2026 at Palmar Public Beach, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) when was the request for police intervention received, indicating what followed;
- (b) the reported number of persons present and allegedly contravening public order and noise pollution legislation, indicating the number thereof arrested and provisionally charged;
- (c) why reinforcement was not mobilised, and
- (d) the measures being contemplated to enhance law enforcement and maintenance of public order on public beaches.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Sunday 25 January 2026 at about 15:50 hours, an anonymous call was received at the Trou d’Eau Douce Police Station requesting Police intervention at Palmar Public Beach, where loud music was being played from several vehicles parked thereat, thereby causing a nuisance.

A team from the Trou d’Eau Douce Police Station proceeded to Palmar Public Beach at around 16:00 hours. Upon arrival, Police Officers noticed several vehicles parked at the site, including one white car with its boot opened and playing very loud music.

Whilst the Police Officers were making enquiries regarding the owner of the said vehicle, several persons who were nearby and consuming alcoholic beverages became hostile and attempted to obstruct the officers in the execution of their duties. At around 17:00 hours, the Police Officers accordingly sought reinforcement and teams from the Emergency Response Service, the *Police du Tourisme* and the Divisional Support Unit called to the location at around 18:15 hours to assist the officers.

With regard to parts (b) and (c) of the question, when Police Officers were attempting to establish contraventions, a crowd of around 250 persons gathered and some uttered abusive

words towards the Police and threw empty beer bottles as well as sand towards them and the Police vehicles. One Police vehicle was slightly damaged.

In these circumstances, the Police Officers adopted a measured approach with a view to avoiding direct confrontation with the hostile crowd, which was around 250, as I said. No arrests could be effected at that time. The Police Officers withdrew from the immediate vicinity while maintaining a Police presence from a distance. The crowd actually dispersed at around 20:30 hours, following which, the Police Officers also left the spot.

Following subsequent enquiries conducted on 26 and 27 January 2026, twelve persons were arrested in connection with the incident. Out of these, eight were provisionally charged for the offence of “Rebellion” and one for “Rogue and Vagabond”, whilst three persons were released after enquiry. Four persons were also contravened for playing loud music.

I have requested the Commissioner of Police to complete the enquiry at the earliest.

As regards part (d) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Police is now deploying a contingent of the Special Mobile Force together with the Divisional Support Unit, Emergency Response Service and *Police du Tourisme* as well as *Police de l'Environnement* every Sunday from 12:00 hours to 20:00 hours at the main public beaches.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned last week, we are also looking into the possibility of increasing the fine. Even though it is rather high, we think it should be increased. And as I mentioned last week in my reply, I think PQ B/78, we will not tolerate that Police Officers are sworn at and distracted while performing their police duties.

People must respect the uniform of that Police Officer who is doing a public duty. The law will be strengthened and be made more severe.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister. Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the first question, if you will allow, is firstly why was it deemed appropriate to allow those persons, who, according to the hon. Prime Minister, himself, were consuming alcohol, were violent, had been rebelling against Police Officers so much so that they were *impuissants*.

Madam Speaker: Please put your question!

Mr A. Duval: The question being: why was it deemed appropriate to let these persons simply go on that night? Why was the SMF and the SSU not mobilised there and then, when it was obvious that the ratio of Police Officers to violent individuals was very much off?

The Prime Minister: As I explained, Madam Speaker, the Police wanted to avoid a direct confrontation with about 250 persons. By the time the SMF would come, they decided, on the spot, that it is better not to have this confrontation now, but they will get these people through the various systems that they have. And they did.

Madam Speaker: So, they are wise after the event?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Mr A. Duval: May I ask?

Madam Speaker: Yes. No statements!

Mr A. Duval: Yes. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister: is he aware that apparently – and maybe he can confirm –, there have been further incidents there at Palmar since this incident? Is he aware of same?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of any further incident, Madam Speaker.

Mr A. Duval: The last question, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have been repeating it time and time again...

Madam Speaker: No, no! Question! Question!

Mr A. Duval: ...for specialised units. I am glad to hear that it will now be done. My plea, however, to the hon. Prime Minister is that 20:00 hours is too early.

Madam Speaker: Put a question!

Mr A. Duval: Will the hon. Prime Minister consider, therefore, extending the time that the SMF and other specialised unit will be on duty at main public beaches to over 20:00 hours? In fact, I would ask him to at least 12 p.m.

Madam Speaker: 12 p.m.? Okay. 12 p.m.

The Prime Minister: I will pass on this suggestion to the Commissioner of Police.

Madam Speaker: Okay, next question!

Hon. Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or!

PORT LOUIS HARBOUR – NEW MASTER PLAN – IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

(No. B/150) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the implementation of the New Master Plan for the Port Louis Harbour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/150 and B/160 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

The Port Master Plan 2024, which focused on development needs up to 2050, was approved by the Board of the Mauritius Ports Authority on 18 March 2025.

Based on cargo forecasts and changes in the port environment, seven infrastructural projects at the estimated cost of Rs56.3 billion have been recommended for implementation with a view to increasing the container handling capacity, improving productivity, port efficiency and operation.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Mauritius Ports Authority has already initiated action for the implementation of three projects, namely –

- (a) the expansion of the existing terminal to accommodate additional container stacking yard and introduction of a new gate system to increase operational efficiency and capacity of the terminal. The Mauritius Ports Authority is finalising the bid documents for the procurement of consultancy services. The Request for Proposals is expected to be floated in April of this year. Works of a duration of 18 months are expected to start by the end of 2027;
- (b) the extension of the Cruise Jetty to accommodate larger cruise vessels. Again, an invitation for proposal for consultancy services through an Open International Bidding exercise was floated on 02 October 2025. Evaluation of the offers is in progress. Construction works of a duration of 18 months are expected to start by October 2027, and
- (c) prequalification document for the selection of contractors for the infrastructural development at Fort William over an extent of 55 hectares has been submitted to the Central Procurement Board on 17 March 2026 for their vetting prior to

launching the pre-qualification of contractors' exercise. Works of a duration of 15 months are expected to start by April 2027.

In addition, the reconstruction of Quays B and C, presently occupied by the National Coast Guard, is being looked into.

Two jetty projects would be financed by private promoters who would be operating at Fort George and Fort William. The Mauritius Ports Authority has already earmarked land of a total extent of three hectares at Fort George for the development of petroleum storage facilities. Procedures for the allocation of land are ongoing. As regards the proposed jetty at Fort William, same will be developed by the promoters of petroleum storage facilities.

Madam Speaker, following my State Visit to India in September of last year, both Governments have agreed on a strategic partnership for the redevelopment and restructuring of the port in Mauritius.

On 19 December 2025, Government agreed to the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Strategy for Port Development under the chair of the then Deputy Prime Minister.

On 06 March 2026, Government agreed, in-principle, to the recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to, *inter alia* –

- (a) opening of capital of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd to Maersk Ltd and Mediterranean Shipping Company Ltd as minority shareholders of up to a threshold of 40%, subject to compliance with the Public Procurement Act and the Competition Act, and
- (b) the implementation of the Island Container Terminal project.

Madam Speaker, the Island Container Terminal project comprises the construction of a breakwater to create a rather tranquil basin, if I may put it that way, in front of the present Mauritius Container Terminal, a navigation channel dredged up to 18 metres deep, a new container terminal of an area of 50 hectares and a quay of 1.2 km in length. The cost of the project, as per the Port Master Plan 2024, is estimated to be approximately Rs47.3 billion excluding VAT and the construction period is projected to be between 6 to 8 years.

In addition to standard container operations, the project is planned as a multi-functional and future-oriented port development.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Etwareea, are you okay? Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, how will the role of the MPA as a landlord and regulator be preserved in the event of increased Private Sector participation in the development of the Port?

The Prime Minister: The Private Sector will be less than 50%.

Madam Speaker: Okay? One more?

Mr Lobine: Yes. And does the Port Master Plan incorporate green port initiative, as it is being done around the world, because as at now, our port is very near to a bird sanctuary as well. So, will this Master Plan englobe this green port initiative?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it will.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you. Now Mr Beehook!

FOREIGN WORKERS – OVERSTAYING ISSUES – PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/151) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to foreign workers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the –

- (a) number thereof having overstayed their respective residence and/or work permit, nationality-wise, and
- (b) measures being taken to prevent overstaying of such workers.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/151 and B/158 together, as they relate to the same subject matter.

In regard to part (a) of the questions, I am informed that as at 27 March 2026, 64,165 foreign workers are employed in Mauritius, of whom 50,234 are holders of work permits under the Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act and 13,931 are holders of occupation permits under the Immigration Act. The main sectors in which they are employed include manufacturing, construction, agriculture, tourism, and SMEs.

I am also informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that as at 27 March 2026, 6,926 foreign workers, are overstaying in Mauritius. The details are as follows –

- (i) 2,819 have been reported as missing by their employers and their work permits have been cancelled;

- (ii) 2,698 have expired work permits and are awaiting renewal thereof, and
- (iii) 1,409 have expired work permits and no applications for renewal were submitted.

I am tabling the nationalities of the overstaying foreign workers.

Madam Speaker, as at 27 March 2026, 6,656 foreign students hold valid residence permits. Foreign students are allowed to work for up to 20 hours per week without the need for any work permit. The Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations is considering to review the existing policy to require concerned institutions to apply for work permits to allow foreign students to work for a maximum period of 20 hours.

With regard to part (b) of the questions, the Tracing and Tracking Team of the Passport and Immigration Office in collaboration with other units and branches of the Police Force do regular crackdown operations throughout the island. For the year 2025, 97 such operations were carried out resulting in the arrest and repatriation of 944 foreigners. Since the beginning of this year, 24 crackdown operations were carried out and 151 foreigners were repatriated.

Madam Speaker, to ensure compliance by employers within the current legislations, I am informed that the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations is not issuing new work permits unless and until the concerned employers have taken the necessary measures to renew the expired work permits of foreign workers or to repatriate them.

Madam Speaker, my Government is very concerned about the problem of foreign workers overstaying in the country and is coming up with the following measures to address the matter –

- (i) a combined work and residence permit with the inclusion of a QR code, which would allow labour inspectors or Police to verify the real-time status of the work and residence permits during surprise visits.
- (ii) A rules-based work permit system will be implemented which would also include an accreditation framework for employers to make them more responsible and liable for the foreign workers they recruit.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beehook! Are you okay?

Hon. Rookny first! Oh, I am sorry, is it all right?

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Prime Minister please advise the House what problems are the Police or PIO having in policing these overstaying workers?

The Prime Minister: It is a good question. The problem is: they seem to disappear in thin air. So, the Police are looking for them. I have also asked the Commissioner of Police, in fact, to strengthen the crack team that is doing the work in cooperation, including the SMF, if need be.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm the following: in reply to a PQ, the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations stated that some 3,000 cases of illegal employment have been regularised. Do we understand that they have made something illegal legal?

Madam Speaker: Employees.

The Prime Minister: No, no. Very often, what happens is that they have submitted their application for a permit – if I am not mistaken – and it's been going through the system.

Madam Speaker: Okay, we have finished with that issue.

Hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière.

APPRENTICE JOCKEYS & JOCKEYS – GRANTING OF LICENCES – INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

(No. B/152) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the granting of licences to local and international apprentice jockeys and jockeys respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the type of insurance required therefor, indicating –

- (a) the monthly or yearly premium applicable category-wise, and
- (b) if there is an age limit for apprentice jockeys and, if so, give the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that as per Section 22.2 of the Rules of Racing 2024, any jockey and apprentice jockey is mandatorily required to have an insurance cover. Although the Rules do not specify the type of cover, insurance taken for jockeys and apprentice jockeys, both local and international, are usually of two types namely, personal accident and health catastrophe cover.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that it is the responsibility of the horse racing organiser, currently the MTC Jockey

Club Ltd, to arrange for the insurance cover, which is then billed to the jockey and apprentice jockey.

I am informed that under the previous Government, People's Turf PLC, did not provide for insurance cover for the jockeys and apprentice jockeys for both 2023 and 2024, the period during which it was, that is, the PLC was the horse racing organiser, and this was against the principles of the Gambling Revenue Authority and, to which the latter, I must say, turned a completely blind eye but they did not do anything about it.

The annual premium for the personal accident cover is as follows –

- Rs 172,500 for a local jockey and an apprentice jockey, and
- Rs 87,500 for a foreign jockey.

The annual premium for the health insurance is Rs14,244 for both a local jockey and the apprentice jockey.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that as per Section 20 of the Rules of Racing 2024, a person can apply for an apprentice jockey licence if that person is aged 16 years or more. This is, I believe, the international practice.

Furthermore, this age limit is in line with Section 10 of the Workers' Rights Act which provides that a person is considered to be of full age and capacity to enter into an employment contract only if the person is aged 16 years or more.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente...

Madam Speaker: Yes, yes.

Mr Quirin: Merci. L'honorable Premier ministre peut-il expliquer à la Chambre, sachant que les difficultés que rencontrent les jockeys et apprentis mauriciens pour gagner leur vie, pourquoi la prime d'assurance est beaucoup plus élevée que celle qui concerne les jockeys étrangers, pratiquement le double si j'ai bien compris la réponse du Premier ministre ?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely because, it is felt that they already have an insurance from wherever they are coming. That is, a foreign jockey already has an assurance which covers them. So, this is why it is lower.

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr Quirin: L'honorable Premier ministre trouve-t-il normale de demander aux jockeys et apprentis mauriciens de déboursier en une seule tranche R172 000 pour une prime d'assurance qui leur permet d'avoir leur licence alors qu'on aurait pu leur faciliter la tâche en les faisant payer en mensualité, en plusieurs tranches. N'est-ce pas là enlever la chance au mauriciens de pouvoir exercer leur métier en toute quiétude ? L'honorable Premier ministre prendra-t-il toute cette question avec la *GRA* ? Pourquoi ne pas demander à la *GRA*, par exemple, de subventionner cette prime d'assurance en partie ?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure that the *GRA* can subsidise them but I could ask them whether it is possible to pay it in *tranches* if that is what you are saying. I could ask them. I do not know whether it is feasible or not because it is the insurance company at the end of the day which will decide.

Madam Speaker: Okay, fair enough. Now we have the hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River!

DRINK DRIVING – REPORTED CASES – PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/153) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to drink driving, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since 01 January 2026 to date, indicating the number thereof wherein the suspects are at their second and third offences, respectively and actions being contemplated to prevent such situations.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the period 01 January 2026 to 27 March 2026, a total of 650 cases of Driving under the Influence of Alcohol were detected by the Police. Out of these 650 cases, I am informed that 46 suspects are at their second offence, 5 are at their third offence and 2 at their fourth offence.

As regards the actions being contemplated to prevent repeating such offences, I am informed that the Police are intensifying targeted enforcement operations, including alcotest checks, vehicle checkpoints and patrols at high-risk periods and locations, whilst also pursuing public awareness and sensitisation campaigns to discourage drink driving and promote responsible behaviour.

Madam Speaker, over and above these measures, Government has already announced that stringent actions are being taken, and will continue to be taken, against all forms of road traffic offences. In fact, the Road Traffic Act has recently been amended to reintroduce the penalty points system which provides for stricter sanctions, including automatic disqualification upon accumulation of penalty points. These amendments also include longer periods of licence suspension for repeated offenders, and tougher fines and penalties for serious traffic offences.

Additionally, the Ministry of Land Transport is currently working on a new piece of legislation whereby vehicles of persons booked for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be immediately impounded. The Commissioner of Police will be empowered to make *ex-parte* application to a Judge in Chambers for the immediate suspension of driving licences in such cases.

Madam Speaker: Yes, are you alright? Okay, now I have the Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, Mr Caserne!

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT – EXISTING VACANCIES – FILLING OF POSTS

(No. B/154) Mr L. Caserne (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Registrar General's Department, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the existing vacancies thereat, grade-wise, indicating the expected date of filling thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there are currently 14 vacant positions at the Registrar-General's Department in different grades. This includes 6 vacancies in the grade of Registration Officer and Senior Registration Officer.

The post, Madam Speaker, was advertised by the Public Services Commission in October 2023, that is, just one year prior to the elections. Following a selection exercise, by way of letter dated 01 October 2024 which was received by the Registrar-General's Department on 04 October 2024, the PSC submitted the names of 8 candidates to be appointed. However, following the dissolution of National Assembly on 04 October 2024, the Department stayed action on this issue and the PSC re-advertised the posts on 30 July 2025 and as at date, recruitment process is still underway at the level of the PSC.

The remaining 8 vacancies are as follows –

- (a) One Principal Financial Operations Officer;
- (b) One Financial Operations Officer/ Senior Financial Operations Officer;
- (c) Three Assistant Financial Operations Officers;
- (d) One Assistant Procurement and Supply Officer;
- (e) One Management Support Officer, and
- (f) One Confidential Secretary.

These grades fall under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms. Action has already been initiated for the filling of these vacancies.

Madam Speaker, there is still a backlog at the level of the PSC and this is why it is taking so much time to fill vacancies in general in the public service.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, are you alright? Yes, Mr Beejan, last question!

**EXPORT ORIENTED (GOODS) ENTERPRISES – WAGE SUPPORT LOAN
SCHEME – TERMS & CONDITIONS**

(No. B/155) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Wage Support Loan Scheme for Export Oriented (Goods) Enterprises implemented to support enterprises severely impacted by COVID-19, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., (DBM), information as to the –

- (a) means of financing thereunder;
- (b) terms and conditions thereof, indicating the –
 - (i) security required, and
 - (ii) number of beneficiaries and amount of loans disbursed, in arrears, settled and written off, respectively and number thereof in liquidation/receivership, further indicating the impact thereof on DBM Ltd., and
- (c) obligations of Government in respect of the unpaid dues.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in June 2020, in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, the previous Government agreed to implement, amongst others, a Wage Support Loan Scheme for Export Oriented (Goods) Enterprises, to be administered through the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd. Out of a total of Rs8 billion which was made available by the Bank of Mauritius to the DBM, Rs5.9 billion has been utilised to service loan requests from its clients under the various COVID-19 Schemes.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Bank of Mauritius provided a Special Line of Credit of Rs2 billion to the Development Bank of Mauritius to facilitate the implementation of the scheme. This line of credit carried an interest rate of 1.3% per annum and was repayable over a period of five years, including a six-month moratorium period. Of the Rs2 billion line of credit, Rs1.5 billion were subsequently on-lent to EOE's.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the DBM that the terms and conditions of the Scheme were as follows –

- (i) the loan amount was determined based on the wage bill of the enterprise;
- (ii) the interest rate of 2% per annum, and
- (iii) the repayment of up to 5 years including a moratorium of six months on capital.

With regard to part (b)(i) of the question on security requirements, I am informed by the Development Bank of Mauritius that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and given that the enterprises were in distress, the Board of the DBM approved the scheme whereby no collateral was requested as security from the beneficiaries of the loans contrary to the usual credit policy guidelines of the Development Bank of Mauritius or of any other bank.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, an amount of Rs1.5 billion was disbursed under the scheme to 43 enterprises. To date, Rs580 million have been repaid, comprising both capital and interest. Currently, 36 enterprises are in arrears for an amount of Rs335 million, that is, Rs299 million in capital and Rs36 million in interest.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that the Development Bank of Mauritius has not written off any liabilities for beneficiaries under the scheme. However, as at 30 June 2025, some Rs400 million of the total portfolio are classified as non-performing, of which Rs304 million relate to five companies that are either in liquidation or under receivership. The five companies are Star Knitwear Group Ltd, Jack Tellor International Limited, Beachwear Exports Co. Ltd, Les Ateliers Creatifs de L'Océan and Riverwalk Investment Ltd. As the

House is aware, incidentally, Star Knitwear Group Ltd still owes the MIC a sum of Rs425 million.

With regard to the impact on the DBM, such provisioning for non-performing loans has seriously affected the accounts of the Development Bank of Mauritius, which show a substantial loss of Rs388 million for the financial year 2024-2025, compared to the positive performance recorded over the past three financial years. Furthermore, the non-payment of the dues by the beneficiaries of the scheme will further impact on the DBM's capacity to meet its repayment obligations to the Bank of Mauritius.

Today, the Development Bank of Mauritius has been squeezed out of all essential funding preventing it to deliver on its core mandate because cronies of the previous Government have looted the bank. This is yet another case of broad daylight robbery of public funds under the previous Government, which has now endangered the financial standing of the Development Bank of Mauritius. Madam Speaker, I have given instructions for an enquiry to be carried out on the whole matter to find out all those responsible for this big financial scandal.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in June 2020, the Ministry of Finance issued a letter of comfort to the Bank of Mauritius to the effect that Government will make its best endeavours to ensure that the DBM meets its obligations in respect to the line of credit. It also provides an underlying fiduciary guarantee that Government would be liable for all liabilities in case of default.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Mr Beejan?

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In light of the alleged abuse of the Scheme by the former Government, will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether any action will be taken to chase those companies which have taken millions of rupees from the DBM and have winded-up after benefiting from the said scheme?

The Prime Minister: It is the intention of Government to do exactly that. In fact, for example, we know that one company has taken all its money and has relocated in South Africa. We are looking into all this.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Time is up now! Thank you very much everyone.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/175 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Local Government and PQ B/176 will be replied by the hon. Minister of National Infrastructure.

Now, we have also been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/156, B/159, B/161, B/162, B/163, B/165, B/166, B/167, B/168, B/169, B/170, B/171, and B/172. Thank you.

Hon. Second Member for Grand' Baie, again!

LODGING ACCOMMODATION PERMIT – APPLICATIONS (PAST SIX MONTHS) & INSPECTIONS

(No. B/173) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Lodging Accommodation Permit (LAP) required in connection with the application for a Work Permit, he will give the list of potential employers having submitted applications therefor over the past six months, indicating the –

- (a) date of submission thereof and the date of the accommodation inspection and average time taken between the submission of a LAP application and the conduct of the said inspection, and
- (b) number of accommodation inspections carried out.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that lodging accommodation for migrant workers and other guest employees are governed by the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 and the Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) Regulation of 2011.

Regulation 6 of the regulation provides that no employer shall use a building as a lodging accommodation unless he holds a Lodging Accommodation Permit (LAP), in respect of that lodging accommodation. Enforcement of the regulation is ensured by the Employees' Lodging Accommodation Section of the National Occupational Safety and Health Department of my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that as per advice tendered by the Attorney General's Office and in view of the provisions of the Data Protection Act, it would not be proper to circulate the names of the potential employers who applied for the LAP.

Over the past six months, that is, from October 2025 till March 2026, 318 applications were received at my Ministry, in respect of which, 220 permits have, as at date, been issued. In addition, 14 applications have been approved, but the applicants have not yet been effected payment of the appropriate fees for the issue of the LAP.

Pending cases are as follows –

- for 18 applications, payment of permit fees has been effected, and same are being processed for issue of permit;
- for 5 applications, letters of compliance are being awaited from the employers, and
- for 2 applications, amended clearances are being awaited from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

As regards the remaining 59 applications, these will be determined at the meeting of the Lodging Accommodation Committee, established under the Regulation, scheduled for today itself.

Madam Speaker, the average time taken between submission of the LAP application and the conduct of the first inspection by my Ministry is 21 days.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that the ELA Section of my Ministry has conducted 413 inspections in respect of 318 applications submitted by potential employers over the past six months.

Accordingly, I am tabling the number of potential employers who have submitted application for LAP over the past six months, together with the respective dates of the applications, and dates of visits carried out for the various lodging accommodations.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan!

Mr Uteem: No!

Madam Speaker: You have not finished?

Mr Uteem: I have not finished. I am just tabling this.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that as at date, out of 84 established posts in the NOSH Department of my Ministry, only 56 officers are physically in post. With regard to the section dealing with LAP application, out of 14 funded posts, there are five vacancies, that is, one third. So, we have a big staffing problem at the Ministry.

On average, my Ministry receives more than 50 new applications for LAP every month and the number is increasing. Despite all efforts, it has not been possible to reduce the time taken to process LAP applications in view of the increasing number of applications and the acute shortage of staff at the NOSH Department.

Madam Speaker, while there is an increase in the demand for migrant workers from employers, my Ministry has also received several complaints from citizens regarding the operation of lodging accommodation in residential areas. With a view to reducing mushrooming of lodging accommodations throughout the island and mitigating these challenges, my Ministry is coming up with a centralised lodging accommodation regulation which will be promulgated shortly. It is at the level of the Attorney General's Office. These regulations will allow several employers to house their workers in a centralised dormitory, of which, the owner will be the licence holder. This is going to greatly reduce the application for LAP going forward. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beejan!

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the financial strain on small businesses from waiting for an inspection of lodging accommodation or issue of work permit, will the hon. Minister consider to recruit more officers and posting be done in those two specific departments in order to relief SMEs or other businesses? Thank you.

Mr Uteem: I totally agree with the hon. Member. We are making the request, and I hope there will be a positive response from the Ministry of Finance in the coming budget.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. That's it?

The hon. Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière!

MASA – CISAC MEMBERSHIP & REQUIREMENTS

(No. B/174) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA), he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to whether it is maintaining and strengthening its membership with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers, and
- (b) state the measures his Ministry proposes to take to assist MASA to fully meet the international requirements necessary to preserve the said membership.

Mr Gondeea: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA) that it has been able to maintain its provisional membership with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), and it has already embarked on the implementation of a series of measures in line with the requirements of CISAC to strengthen its membership.

I am also informed that at its General Assembly held on 28 May 2025, CISAC had approved the extension of MASA’s provisional membership for a further period of two years, subject to compliance with strict conditions as CISAC had already informed that no further extension will be granted.

Madam Speaker, it is important to underline that the situation we inherited was a matter of serious concern. For years, there had been clear warning signals regarding the governance, compliance and overall functioning of MASA. This prolonged inaction placed MASA’s international standing at risk and created uncertainty for Mauritian artists.

Madam Speaker, faced with this situation, my Ministry has acted promptly and responsibly. In this context, I am informed that the Regional Direction for Africa of CISAC effected a mission to Mauritius from 23 to 27 February 2026 to guide MASA on the measures required to ensure compliance and safeguard membership.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that MASA has already initiated concrete steps to meet CISAC requirements, including –

- (i) uploading of the audited financial statements for years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 on the CISAC Governance Portal on 31 October 2025;

- (ii) submitting the financial statements for the years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to the National Audit Office for auditing, with unaudited versions already uploaded on the portal;
- (iii) updating its repertoire CIS-NET on 02 November 2025, with the next update scheduled for May 2026, and
- (iv) distributing approximately Rs18.7 million to local copyright owners in December 2025 and Rs1.7 million to Foreign Right Holders in February 2026.

These actions demonstrate that MASA is actively aligning with international standards.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, Government has provided for a sum of Rs4 million over two years for the restructuring of MASA to assist the society in fully meeting the international requirements necessary to preserve its membership with CISAC.

However, given that MASA currently owns approximately Rs95 million in accumulated funds with insufficient clarity and on their collection and reasons for non-distribution over a prolonged period, the Board of MASA has approved that a comprehensive forensic audit be undertaken as priority.

Madam Speaker, the terms of reference for this audit which are being finalised by my Ministry will be launched shortly. This exercise is essential to restore confidence among artists and stakeholders to ensure that MASA is placed on a sound footing prior to restructuring. Based on the findings of the forensic audit, my Ministry will thereafter proceed with the consultancy services for a comprehensive restructuring plan.

In parallel, my Ministry is supporting MASA in its modernisation efforts, including the acquisition of a cloud system to match the requirement of WIPO Connect. This will enhance repertoire management, improve royalty tracking and distribution to artists.

Madam Speaker, I therefore wish to reassure that my Ministry remains fully committed to supporting MASA in meeting all international requirements with a view to preserving and consolidating its membership with CISAC and ensuring that Mauritian authors and right owners receive the royalties to which they are entitled.

Madam Speaker, our artists deserve nothing less and as Minister of Arts and Culture, I will stand firmly by them. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister! Yes!

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Le ministre peut-il préciser à la Chambre s'il y a un délai qui a été fixé par l'instance internationale pour la régularisation de la situation et s'il existe un risque de suspension ou de retrait de cette adhésion ?

Mr Gondeea: Je viens de préciser qu'on a déjà commencé le travail à la satisfaction de l'organisation.

Madam Speaker: Donc, il n'y a pas de délai pour l'instant.

Mr Quirin: Donc, peut-on savoir si son ministère considère effectivement que ce *membership*, cette adhésion constitue un pilier essentiel pour le développement du secteur créatif mauricien et ainsi améliorant les revenus des artistes ?

Mr Gondeea: Yes, of course, we will do it.

Madam Speaker: Très bien!

Good ! So, now I finish with Mr Quirin. Next page, sorry. So, now we have hon. Apollon!

LANDS (BARE & NEGLECTED) – VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES – MEASURES

(No. B/175) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to bare and neglected lands, he will state the measures his Ministry is taking or envisaging to prevent same from being prolific breeding grounds for mosquitoes and the subsequent spread of diseases, including Chikungunya.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Wochit): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ B/175.

In respond of the rising incidence of vector-borne diseases, including Chikungunya, my Ministry is actively participating in a coordinated and multisectoral strategy through an inter-ministerial committee chaired by the Minister of Health and Wellness and comprising all local authorities, the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change. This collaborative platform ensures a unified and structured national response with all relevant stakeholders working in close coordination to implement preventive and corrective measures.

Local authorities have intensified their cooperation to identify, clean and maintain bare and neglected lands across the island. As at date, 1,220 plots of bare lands have been cleaned and the detailed list is being tabled.

Madam Speaker, under section 61(9) of the Local Government Act 2011, the Local Authorities are empowered to intervene directly where such land poses a threat to public health, particularly in cases of unknown ownership or non-compliance. This provision is being actively enforced. Local authorities have also served enforcement notices on owners of bare lands, requiring remedial actions and as at date 1,368 enforcement notices have been issued, out of which 790 have already been complied with. Appropriate actions including legal proceedings are being initiated in cases of non-compliance.

To further strengthen these measures, a meeting was held on 20 February and a circular was also issued on 10 March 2026 to all local authorities to intensify enforcement against bare land and illegal dumping. In parallel, Health Inspectors have increased the frequency of inspections and enforcement actions within their respective jurisdiction to ensure close monitoring and timely intervention.

Madam Speaker, the Mauri-Facilities Management Co. Ltd and the Living Environment Unit of the Ministry of Environment have deployed dedicated teams to carry out targeted and large-scale cleaning operations in priority areas, including Camp Leveux, Roches Brunes and other affected regions. Similar exercises are on-going across Municipal and District Councils covering road reserve, green space and other public areas. These interventions are being implemented within existing budgetary provision including allocation under the Climate Sustainability Fund whereby ensuring efficient and responsible use of public funds. Enforcement under the Environment Act 2024 is also being strictly applied. Eyesore Abatement Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices are being issued by local authorities and *Police de L'environnement*.

From January 2025 to February 2026, 491 notices were issued by local authorities and 143 by the police with fixed penalty imposed in cases of non-compliance. Public awareness campaigns are also being conducted to promote proper sanitation practices at both household and community levels. An amount of approximately Rs2.5 million has been earmarked for this purpose.

Madam Speaker, whilst significant progress has already been achieved, I wish to underline that there remain additional areas requiring interventions. In this regard,

recruitment of additional personnel started last week and is currently on-going. Upon completion, these additional resources will allow for the deployment of more dedicated teams to further strengthen the cleaning and maintenance of bare land and to enhance our national response in combatting Chikungunya and other vector-borne diseases.

On Thursday next, that is, on 02 April, we will have another inter-ministerial committee which will be held at the Office of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling a detailed information including the details, the extent of lands cleaned and enforcement action undertaken.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister! Yes, very good!

Now, B/176 has been withdrawn. The Table has been advised, while I am at it, I am also telling you about B/184, B/203, B/213, B/218, that have been withdrawn. So, Ministers, please take note.

Now, so we go to Mr Lobine, then!

**LA VIGIE-LA BRASSERIE-BEAUX SONGES LINK ROAD – CYCLE LANES –
ASSESSMENT/MONITORING FRAMEWORK**

(No. B/176) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the cycle lanes incorporated into thirteen road projects across 31.4 kilometres at the cost of Rs 546 million, including the 9.2 kilometres stretch along Phase 2 of the La Vigie–La Brasserie–Beaux Songes Link Road valued at Rs 199.1 million, he will state whether any post-implementation assessment or monitoring framework was established, prior to or following the commissioning thereof, to evaluate the –

- (a) usage frequency;
- (b) impact on accident reduction, and
- (c) user satisfaction thereof and, if so, give details thereof, including the methodology adopted, frequency of assessments carried out and findings thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ELECTRONIC MONITORING BRACELETS – TIME FRAME

(No. B/177) **Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the use of electronic monitoring bracelets, he will state where matters stand as to the –

- (a) implementation thereof, indicating the reasons –
 - (i) why the relevant provisions for electronic monitoring have not yet been proclaimed or put into operation as at to date, and
 - (ii) for the absence of regulations defining the operational protocols and monitoring procedures, and
- (b) proposed time frame for the full implementation thereof.

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, the Bail Act was amended in 2011 to provide in section 8(4) thereof, for the imposition of electronic monitoring for a limited category of defendants or detainees to be released on bail, namely for those who are not ordinarily residents in Mauritius or for those who are residents but liable on conviction for the offense with which they have been charged penal servitude or to imprisonment for a term exceeding two years and who are also persons, whom a police officer not below the rank of Superintendent has reasonable grounds to believe or likely to leave Mauritius.

Section 8 (4) was not and has still not been proclaimed. My office has contacted the office of the Commissioner of Police which is responsible for the implementation and operation of the proposed electronic monitoring of defendants and detainees. And, the Commissioner of Police has informed my office that a technical committee was set up, at the time, under the Chairmanship of the then Deputy Commissioner of Police administration, to examine the implementation and use of the electronic bracelets for persons to be released on bail.

However, that committee decided that it would not be prudent to proceed with the project due to its high-cost implications. The project was thus put on hold indefinitely.

As at today, it is not possible to give a timeframe for the implementation of the project, which though commendable, is one which is very costly. We have to look at the priorities of the day and at the moment, it is not possible to give a precise timetable for its implementation. However, this issue will be looked into anew at the time we finalise the Police and Criminal Justice Bill later this year.

Madam Speaker: Okay, that's it. Good.

Now, we have Mr Beejan, again.

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 – ACCIDENT-PRONE AREAS – SPEED BREAKERS
& TRAFFIC LIGHTS**

(No. B/178) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the installation of high-raised speed breakers and traffic lights, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the consideration given therefor in localities of Constituency No. 6, particularly, in the vicinity of schools, religious places, area health centres and accident-prone areas over the past two years, indicating the timelines for the installation of any outstanding or proposed ones.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that raised tables are traffic calming measures installed on public roads and are placed at locations where a reduction in vehicles' speed is deemed necessary due to safety consideration. Such locations may include straight road alignments, residential zones and areas with high pedestrian activity.

I am informed by the TMRSU that over the last two years, the following traffic calming measures have been carried out in Constituency No.6 –

- (i) Construction of a raised table along Saint François Road at Petit Raffray;
- (ii) Implementation of a raised pedestrian crossing at LUX Hotel, Grand Baie;
- (iii) Conversion of an existing at-grade pedestrian crossing into a raised pedestrian crossing along Vale Road at Upper Vale, near the Mandir.

Furthermore, the following road safety measures have been implemented –

- Installation of a fixed Speed Camera at Fond du Sac along Plaines des Papayes Road (B11) in November 2024, and also
- Implementation of Speed Zone of 40 km/h along Grand Gaube Coastal Road at Roche Terre near Roche Terre Government School July 2025.

Madam Speaker, I am made to understand that the TMRSU is pursuing discussions with the District Council of Rivière du Rempart regarding the implementation of both single and double yellow line markings at some 10 locations identified in October 2025 to prevent

on-street parking of vehicles and enhance road safety in the region. The hon. Member will surely recall that we had effected at site-visit together with his two *colistiers*.

I have to highlight, Madam Speaker, that several projects identified across the island, I am going to the national level now, including in Constituency No. 6, could not be implemented so far in view that the bidding exercise for the Framework Agreement by the Central Procurement Board took an excessively long time to materialise.

I am informed that the bidding documents were finalised only in May 2025 and bids were floated on 03 June 2025 by the CPB. The recommendations of the latter were received only in January 2026 and challenge was subsequently lodged by one bidder. Fortunately, in view that the matter was not referred to the Independent Review Panel, the contract was awarded by my Ministry on 05 March 2026 and I am given to understand that the submission of the insurance cover is currently awaited from one of the selected bidders to enable signature of contract, and issuance of works orders by the TMRSU. All pending works will, therefore, be implemented as a matter of urgency. I am sure that many of my colleagues across the island will be happy to learn about this development at long last, which were beyond our control.

I am further informed that, in the continuous effort to improve road safety along public roads, the construction of traffic calming measures (raised tables) at the following locations, which is part of the question, in Constituency No. 6, are in the pipeline –

1. Cap Malheureux, along B45 Road, near Kalimaye/Kovil Cap Malheureux ;
2. Cap Malheureux, along B45 Road, near Arya Samaj Mandir;
3. Roche Terre, along B14 Road, near TVS Supermarket;
4. Grand Gaube, along B14 Road, near Veranda Paul & Virginie Hotel & Spa;
5. Pereybère, along Old Mill Road, near Oasis Villas 1, and
6. Residential Morcellement at Beau Manguier, Pereybère.

Madam Speaker, with regard to traffic lights, I am informed that the T-junction of Mont Choisy–Cap Malheureux Road (B13) near BLOOM, will be signalised in the course of time during this year.

In view of concerns raised by the hon. Member, I have instructed the TMRSU to carry out surveys in the vicinity of schools, religious places, area health centres and of course, all

accident-prone areas within Constituency No. 6 to identify the need for traffic calming measures for early implementation.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Mr Beejan.

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister, inform the House what budget allocations have been made for traffic calming measure in Constituency No.6 Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or in the current and previous financial year and how much have been utilised till date?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am given to understand by the TRMSU that the final figure is being worked out but rest assured that they will be implemented. Like I said, all we needed was a good contractor but now, following the process of the CPB, we have contractors and they will be implemented in due course.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Yes, Mr Beehook.

Mr Beehook: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister please request the TRMSU to consider the following suggestion that usually they apply a blanket rule of not allowing high raised speed breakers which is one single strip that is, from the right-hand side to the left-hand side of the road, rightly so, unless there are drains on each side. Can they consider the possibility of having those bumps, which are divided into two, with a passage in-between, that is, one right-hand side one the left-hand side to enable the flow of water so that we don't face the situation that they usually refuse to have speed breakers on roads because there are no drains on each side?

Mr Osman Mahomed: A very high technical matter indeed. I will ask the technicians to look into, certainly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Chief Whip, last question; before lunch, I mean.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – WATER LEAKAGES – DETECTION EQUIPMENT – COVERED AREAS & TIMELINE

(No. B/179) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water leakages in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether leak detection equipment is being deployed thereat and, if so, give details thereof, the areas covered and the timeline for the carrying out of a comprehensive leak detection exercise.

Mr Assirvaden : Madame la présidente, la CWA m'informe que les régions de Quatre Bornes, Palma, Bassin, Belle Rose, Sodnac et Cité Kennedy, qui font partie de la zone d'approvisionnement en eau inférieure à Mare aux Vacoas.

Ces régions disposent d'un réseau vieillissant d'environ 60 km. Donc ces tuyaux sont sujets à des fuites. Les fuites visibles sont réparées par la CWA dans le cadre de ses opérations courantes. En cas de dysfonctionnement du réseau laissant suspecter des fuites invisibles, du matériel de détection est déployé sur place pour localiser les fuites, puis les réparations sont effectuées.

Madame la présidente, la CWA a également indiqué que les équipements utilisés pour la détection des fuites sont principalement des détecteurs et enregistreurs de fuites acoustiques. Un budget est prévu chaque année pour l'acquisition de ces équipements. Il convient de souligner, Madame la présidente, que des fois des déviations de la circulation sont généralement nécessaires, ce qui influe sur le temps dont dispose la CWA pour effectuer les réparations.

Afin d'améliorer l'efficacité du réseau de distribution d'eau dans ces régions, j'ai également appris que d'importants travaux de remplacement des tuyaux, entre le rond-point de Saint-Jean et Rose Hill, ont été prévus dans le cadre du programme de remplacement des tuyaux financé par la Ligne de crédit indienne. Les appels d'offres devraient être lancés cette année-ci donc dans deux ou trois mois en juillet de cette année-ci.

Madame la présidente, le service des pertes d'eau, *non revenue water*, non facturées de la CWA compte actuellement cinq personnes, seulement cinq personnes. Grâce au soutien budgétaire de l'AFD (l'Agence Française de Développement) dans le secteur de l'eau, la CWA renforcera ce service afin que, d'ici 2027, chacune des six zones de distribution d'eau dispose d'une équipe de cinq personnes, dédiées à la détection des fuites et à la gestion des pertes d'eau non facturées. Cette mesure devrait permettre d'améliorer significativement le réseau.

Par ailleurs, le gouvernement alloue chaque année des fonds à la CWA pour l'acquisition d'équipements de détection des fuites d'eau. Un montant de R 12 millions est prévu pour l'exercice financier en cours.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente, et je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse. Le ministre peut-il confirmer à la Chambre si des tuyaux

d'alimentation en eau y ont été placés à la hâte, à la veille des élections générales en 2024, en violation des normes de profondeur, entraînant des fuites à répétition ainsi que des difficultés d'asphaltage des routes sur plusieurs routes à Quatre Bornes, dont Pousse-Passe Avenue ?

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, à maintes reprises au sein de l'Assemblée nationale, j'ai fait référence aux R 700 millions de *Pipe Replacement Programme* qui a été entrepris par la CWA. Une enveloppe de R 700 millions.

Malheureusement, les 700 millions, ces fonds n'ont pas été utilisés exclusivement pour le *Pipe Replacement Programme*. Ce n'est que 44 % des paiements qui ont été dirigés vers ce projet. Je l'ai dit plusieurs fois : le non-respect, dans certains cas, des procédures d'appel d'offres, des pratiques comptables déficientes dans ces cas-là, pour vous dire qu'aujourd'hui, en 2026, on se retrouve, après avoir dépensé R 700 millions dans ce programme, avec de nombreux foyers qui restent encore privés d'eau alors que nous avons dépensé autant d'argent !

Faute de raccordement, des tuyaux demeurent visibles. Je ne sais pas si dans certaines régions, les honorables membres sont au courant que de nombreux tuyaux restent visibles, laissés à même le sol dans certaines localités. Pour vous dire, si je dois demander au ministère des Finances, dans le prochain budget, de l'argent pour faire enfouir ces tuyaux, vous réaliserez qu'il faudra peut-être un budget de R 200 à R 300 millions pour l'enfouissement de ces tuyaux.

Alors, il faudra qu'on se décide. Ce gouvernement ; nous avons hérité de ce que nous avons hérité. Il faudra savoir : est-ce que nous allons mettre de l'argent, R 300 millions, dans l'enfouissement des tuyaux ou nous allons mettre de l'argent pour améliorer le service de distribution d'eau ?

Pour vous dire, donc, nous sommes dans une situation complexe où je ne blâme pas l'ancien, celui qui m'a précédé, je ne le blâme pas. Je ne sais pas s'il est là.

An hon. Member: Il est là !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Oh, oh, oh!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais je me permettrais de dire qu'il n'était pas à blâmer parce que l'ancien *General Manager* de la CWA ne répondait pas à ce ministre ! Vous réalisez ?

An hon. Member : *Pran kass!*

Mr Assirvaden: Donc, pour vous dire, R 700 millions, malheureusement, c'est du fiasco !

Madam Speaker: Yes !

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Peut-on savoir du ministre si le projet pilote de réduction des pertes d'eaux *non-revenue water* financé par l'Agence française de développement (AFD), dont il a fait mention dans sa réponse, pourra démarrer dans la circonscription de Belle Rose et Quatre Bornes, no. 18 ?

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: Non, j'ai failli être député là-bas.

Madam Speaker: Allez-y, M. le ministre !

Mr Assirvaden: Simplement, pour rassurer : vous savez, le projet est financé par l'AFD, Madame la présidente. Le but, c'est de renforcer l'effectif du *non-revenue water*. Donc, nous avons actuellement que cinq personnes dans une zone. Ce que nous voulons avec ce projet, avec le financement de l'AFD, c'est que dans chaque zone, nous ayons une équipe de cinq personnes.

Donc, pour vous dire, malheureusement, en 2022, l'ancienne équipe avait aboli ce *non-revenue water*.

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable !

Mr Assirvaden: Alors que nous perdons plus de 60 % sur notre réseau ! Donc, avec l'appui de l'AFD, effectivement, pas que chez vous, honorable membre, mais dans différentes zones encore, nous aurons une équipe de cinq personnes comprenant ingénieur, ouvriers, cadre administratif, qui sera postée dans chaque zone et aura la responsabilité de s'acquitter de cette tâche pour réduire – nous essayons de réduire – les pertes physiques et commerciales dues à ces tuyaux vieillissants.

Madam Speaker: Tout va bien ?

Ms Anquetil: Tout va bien. Merci.

Madam Speaker: Parfait ! Je lève la séance pour une heure et demie. On revient à deux heures et demie.

At 1.00 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m., with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

**ENDOCRINOLOGY/DIABETOLOGY – SPECIALIST/SENIOR SPECIALIST –
POST**

(No. B/180) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the post of Specialist/Senior Specialist in the field of Endocrinology/Diabetology, he will state the –

- (a) duties and scope of practice thereof, indicating whether they are authorised to perform invasive procedures, including wound opening and surgical interventions in the management of diabetic foot and, if not, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) patients requiring such procedures are systematically referred to other specialists and, if so, whether a review of the existing protocols will be considered to allow for specialised diabetic foot care within the discipline of diabetology.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, in accordance to the prescribed Scheme of Service, a Specialist/Senior Specialist is responsible for provision of an effective and efficient clinical service in his speciality.

In this respect, he responsible to the Regional Health Director through the Consultant in Charge of the relevant field for the following –

1. to perform clinical and other work pertaining to his speciality,
2. to mentor and train junior medical nursing and other have personal;
3. to initiate and participate in surveys and research activities and publications;
4. to contribute to the development of health programmes.

There are no rigidly prescribed duties or narrowly defined scope of practice specified to specialists in the field of Endocrinology and Diabetology. In fact, endocrinology and diabetology by their very nature are dynamic and multidisciplinary fields encompassing metabolic, hormonal, cardiovascular, renal and neurosurgical aspects of care. As such, clinical responsibilities are exercised within a collaborative patient-centred model rather than confined to a fixed list of tasks.

I am further informed that the management of complex wounds and surgical interventions and patient care is delivered through a multidisciplinary team approach. This particularly involves close collaboration between Endocrinologists, Diabetologists, and other Specialists such as surgeons, Vascular Surgeons, Wound Care Specialist, nurses and allied health professionals depending on the clinical need of the patient.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, diabetic foot management is usually referred to a multidisciplinary team as per International Best Practice Guidelines and is as follows –

- (i) Radiologists who look after the vascular part in order to inform the surgeon regarding blood circulation in the affected foot;
- (ii) General surgeons who evaluate and give treatment for diabetic foot ulcers;
- (iii) Vascular Surgeons may do a bypass of the artery to supply regions which are affected by diabetes;
- (iv) Pathologists verify tissues for histopathology, and
- (v) Diabetologists who offer medication and advice to control medical aspects of diabetes.

The protocol of diabetic footcare delivery will be reviewed during the visit of Dr. Marie-France Kong, Consultant Diabetologist, from United Kingdom, and her team, scheduled for June 2026.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Rookny: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the hon. Minister agree that given the very high number of amputations resulting from diabetes, would it not be a better approach to follow the US and the UK in allowing Diabetologists to perform treatment for open wound for diabetic foot?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, well, I am not in the medical field but this is the information which has been given to me. In fact, this system was set up a little bit by our hon. Prime Minister in the early, I think, 2013 or 2014, the new code was established and that was under his guidance. There was one eminent professor from England who came and who set up all these guidelines.

I do hope with the advent of the professor who is coming to Mauritius, we will get more information and we will try to get more advice from him.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will just ask the hon. Minister, since we are talking about specialist and Endocrinologist and Diabetologists, in the same vein there is always a very narrow area of the scope of duties that are expected from specialists while the sole authority to allow a specialist to practice in Mauritius relies under the purview of the Medical Council.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether he could see with the Medical Council how to give the scope of duties or the boundaries to which particular specialists are allowed to work and do procedures or treatment because, today, we are seeing specialists...

Madam Speaker: Do not argue, ask him a question.

Dr. Aumeer: Yes, one specialist which is outside the remit of another specialist doing the job and you get complications and patients who at the end suffer the brunt of it.

Mr Bachoo: I will take it up at the level of my Ministry with is our consultants who are there and I will try to get their advice and then communicate to the Medical Council.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Alright everybody?

Yes, one more?

Mr Rookny: Could the hon. Minister please advise if the Surgeons, the General Surgeons, to whom cases of diabetic footcare are referred, do they receive regular and specialised training for treating these types of problems?

Mr Bachoo: We have got the General Surgeons, number one, and I hope that they are properly trained. At the same time, we have got many qualified nurses in that field, many doctors also, who were looking after them. We have got not only surgeons but we have got competent doctors, Diabetologists, whom we have in our hospitals. But I do recognise that there is a shortage of such doctors and I do hope that in the near future we are going to recruit a bit more.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Alright, good!

Now we have First Member for Savanne & Black River.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 – SOCIAL HOUSING – WAITING LIST

(No. B/181) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to social housing, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Social Living Development Ltd., information as to the number of units thereof currently available and the number of applicants therefor on the waiting list in Constituency No. 14 and at national level, respectively, indicating the allocation procedures and the timeline therefor.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The 8000 residential units were designed to cater for 400 units per constituency. I am informed by the NSLD that as date, the construction of 2438 housing units including on-site and off-site infrastructural works have been completed over 12 sites across the island.

I am further informed that as at 26 March 2026, out 56,794 applicants for the whole island, there were 3574 for Constituency No.14.

In regard to allocation procedures, or applicants for housing units are, I understand from the NHDC, called for an interview whereby they are also requested to submit all relevant documents thereafter. Only those who meet the established eligibility criteria are short listed.

I am given to understand that once an applicant has been found to be eligible for a housing unit, the time taken for delivery of the unit to the beneficiary, depends on two major factors –

- (a) the approval of the loan by the lending institution in most cases, commercial banks, and
- (b) signature of deed of sale.

According to information provided to me, it is expected that by the end of August 2026, the 2438 housing units which are ready will have been delivered.

Let me take this opportunity once again, Madam Speaker, to underline that there is a set eligibility criterion at the level of the NHDC. The first one is based on ownership; that the applicant should not be owner of the housing unit or a plot of residential land subject to paragraph (b) – an applicant or spouse who is the owner of undivided rights in the property by way of succession, inheritance” is eligible for an NHDC, NSLD housing unit where the inherited property cannot be conveniently divided in kind among the co-heirs to allow the construction or allocation of an individual housing unit to each heir.

So, those eligibility criteria – and I would like to underline the following – that there is an income threshold of Rs48,000, that the applicant is considered to have the repayment capacity to service the mortgage debt for the purchase of NHDC housing unit and the applicants selected for the NSLD house unit are directed to financial institutions for the purchase.

Now, the eligibility criteria, I would like to underline that the couple married or in pre-union or joint applicants or single applicants; divorced, widow, single parent with –

- four or more dependents, they earn 10 points;
- with three dependents, they earn 9 marks;
- with two dependents, they earn 8 marks, and
- with one dependent, they earn 7 marks, and
- couples or joint applicants without dependents, 6 marks;
- divorced, widowed, old age pensions without dependents, 5 marks.

So, try not to get divorced but with regard to households which are not given any marks, other types of households, zero marks. Now, the catchment area also is of relevance and hardship cases – a lot of people ask me those questions – they are –

- victims of fire, cyclone, floods and other natural disasters;
- victims of domestic violence;
- single parents with dependents;
- persons with severe medical conditions or impairments, and
- officers of the NHDC carry out site visits and liaise with relevant authorities to assess the genuineness of the applicants under the hardship criteria.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you, hon. Minister. Yes?

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, can the Minister inform the House where matters stand concerning the project of 90 houses for the site of Surinam, whether it is going on or not?

Mr Mohamed: I believe that this House referred to No. 14 in Surinam. I am getting to that right now. With regard to Surinam, he is most probably talking about the one that has stopped. There has been – I do not know if he is referring to the one which was where Kuros was responsible for the construction. There has been non-compliance with the contractual obligations. I speak from memory, non-compliance with contractual obligations and the NSLD has put an end to contracts with regard to the company called Kuros and followed all procedures in order to bring an end to that.

However, basically the project is not over. There is the need to ensure that houses that could not be completed because of breach of contract on the part of the contractor, are proceeded with and therefore, the NSLD is going to ensure that this is continued. So, it is not over. Unfortunately, it has been delayed and under the old regime, there are certain contractors clearly who have been paid a lot of money but who have not, in any way, given results. Unfortunately, there was a *laissez-aller* which was totally uncalled for, criminal in behaviour I must say, and taxpayers' money was thrown left, right and centre, as though they owned the thing and they were like there was no tomorrow. So, at the end of the day, you end up with what you end up with, which is basically not much to really write home about.

So, we have to wipe and clear up the mess. So, this is precisely what we are endeavouring to do and I can assure the hon. Member and the inhabitants of that Constituency that the job is not over but we are going ensure that it is completed and that there is value for money.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Babajee, then hon. Jhummun.

Mr Babajee: Will the hon. Minister consider squatters to have some special criteria for those social houses as the number of squatters in the west is increasing?

Mr Mohamed: It is a very interesting question indeed – and very often, a lot of people or at least my predecessor and those who have been around for a few years during the last regime – what has happened in No. 14 and I am going to say it very bluntly, forgive me for that because that is truth – some people have encouraged and those people know who. Some people who were in ministerial positions have encouraged people to go and squat. Go and squat and you shall be *régularisé* and in the circumstance of what had happened, is that you have proliferation of squatters, specifically in Constituency No. 14 and the hon. Member knows well together with his colleagues where. So, this proliferation has led to a situation of problem with regards to infrastructure, problem with regards to law and order and there is a total indiscipline.

We end up with a situation, Madam Speaker, where people believe that because they are squatters, they are entitled to a plot of land given by the State. The answer is no. There is no automatic entitlement because if we are to go along your suggestion – because I take it is only a suggestion and we are here to at least discuss constructively – to under the hardship case to put in squatters, I can assure the hon. Member, Madam Speaker, that we are going to

have not only a proliferation of squatters, we are going to have people even with houses squat the place because they think it is a God-given right to them to get a plot of land. No!

On the other hand, you have people who have real hardships as it is in the eligibility criteria and we have to help them and we will help them whereas people who end up going to places to squat simply because in return, they expect it to be given to them free of charge, that cannot be tolerated. Yes, we will show ourselves generous to people and understandable, compassionate to people who are on a plot of land, who had no other choice than to go there and they have not come to knock at our door to say ‘give it to me as a matter of right’. It is because we understand, *ça doit être régularisé*, we do it on a case-to-case basis.

So, we cannot continue tolerating this indiscipline. So, in answer to your question, the answer is no. It will not be put under the criteria of hardship eligibility because that would be opening the flood gates and doing the same thing that was done by a former Minister, whom you know very well.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Following the answer of the hon. Minister to hon. Jugurnauth, does the same issues arise for No. 13, regarding the houses still pending and we are unable to give them to house seekers?

Mr Mohamed: The bad news is that yes, in the Constituency No. 13 that happens to be the first constituency I was elected in and I have good memory of that constituency, yes, it is the same situation because that very company is guilty of laches and breach of contract and we have had to take action once again because we cannot sit down idly and see a company which has been paid by taxpayers’ money blatantly breach the contract. We cannot do that. So, we had to act. We have taken the decision. The reason for the delay in that constituency as well as No. 14 is precisely the fault of the contractor. So, let us not cry over spilt milk. What is the solution? The solution is that there has to be a bidding process for a contractor to be chosen to complete the job. And yes, I know that there are certain inhabitants in certain places who have complained because some of the sites – in other constituencies as well – where

contractors have done wrong and are left in an abandoned state, it is not as though it is over. It will continue but I cannot, as Minister, choose, who is going to be the contractor. There is a process to follow and it has to be followed in line with the law.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Jhummun: Do you have any idea as to when we can allocate these houses? Any idea?

Mr Mohamed: If it could have been done yesterday, I would have been the happiest. No, it is not only a question of money but for that...

Madam Speaker: Short and sweet!

Mr Mohamed: No, I mean once upon a time, they used to say as soon as possible but to be honest, it is a construction and for construction, you cannot have a set date on it. Once the bidding process is completed, we will have a date, estimated completion and then as we hope, it will be done quicker. So, our intention and our aim are to finish very quickly because we know that there are a lot of people waiting for those.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Beehook?

Mr Beehook: Yes, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Minister for this reply. I would ask the hon. Minister how much this disaster is going to cost additionally to the NSLD?

Mr Mohamed: This disaster has led us to see how we can mitigate the risk because we cannot just let costs increase. So, a risk mitigation has been implemented. That is why we put an end to the contract.

Now, there were certain performance guarantees that were held and were viewed by financial institutions. Forgive me, I am only speaking from memory. I know for a fact that we have tapped onto that. But still, there will be losses. I cannot put it in figures.

What annoys me in terms of prejudice here – let alone the financial prejudice – are the hearts of many of those, who are waiting for houses, that are broken. They are impatient, and it is legitimate on their part to get a roof over their heads. I am aware of it. I have heard them. I have spoken to many of them. But I can assure you, through this House, Madam Speaker, as I have said, that we will endeavour to complete those projects. Not only that, we will endeavour to start new ones as well. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Your memory seems okay!

Hon. Ramdass, yes!

(No. B/182) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to services provided in post offices, including payment of bills and road tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Post Ltd., information as to the accepted modes of payment thereat.

Dr. Ramtohol: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for this question.

I am informed by Mauritius Post Ltd. that it currently operates a total of 114 outlets, including five in Rodrigues and one in Agalega. Out of these 114 outlets in Mauritius, 100 are providing postal services such as delivery of letters, parcels, selling of stamps and non-postal services as well. A total of 55 postal and 24 non-postal.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius Post Ltd. has further informed me that 91 of those post offices are equipped with fully operational point of sale systems whereby payment by cards for CEB bills and postal services are currently being accepted. Mauritius Post Ltd. is in discussion with the NLTA, CWA and MT to provide for alternative modes of electronic payment.

I am further informed that payment by card for a minimum of Rs200 can, in fact, be accepted by Mauritius Post Ltd. in so far as the utility company concerned gives relevant instructions to Mauritius Post Ltd. The issue reported, therefore, is not that of technical feasibility, but that of financial viability. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, hon. Ramdass!

Mr Ramdass: *Madam Speaker, in respect of payment of NLTA services, le ministre étant lui-même un érudit de la technologie, à un moment où nous faisons de moins en moins de paiements en espèces, conviendrait-il qu'il est grand temps d'autoriser, voire même d'encourager d'autres moyens de paiements numériques tels que Juice, my.t money, cartes de crédit, etc. ? Serait-il disposé à engager des pourparlers en ce sens auprès des bureaux de postes de l'île Maurice ?*

Madam Speaker: M. le ministre !

Dr. Ramtohul: Thank you, hon. Member for the supplementary question. I think, in Mauritius of 2026, we need to have people online, not in line, to effect payments at government counters.

My Ministry is actually attending some committees, under the Bank of Mauritius, to look into the possibility of even having government counters accept payment by electronic modes. Not just the Mauritius Post.

As a Ministry, we are working towards a point where people will be able to effect all their payments online. So, one extension of the KOREK app will be to also accept the online renewal of MVL through the app, and payment modal will also be electronic, obviously. So, yes, we are doing it.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Not happy? One more!

Mr Ramdass: Madam Speaker, that is, obviously, in respect of online apps, but how about the counters in the specific units of the Mauritius Post? Will the hon. Minister consider the possibility of authorising payments by electronic means at those counters for NLTA services? At the moment, it is not the case.

Madam Speaker: At the counters, hon. Minister!

Dr. Ramtohul: So, it is a decision to be made by the NLTA. Why? Because there is a commission that is applicable on the payment received via cards. Even via Juice. So, a decision needs to be made by the NLTA. Once the instructions have been provided, the Mauritius Post will be able to accept the payments. We are awaiting authorisation from the authority involved. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I think we have got it now.

So, Mr Apollon, Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien!

MAHEBOURG HOSPITAL – METHADONE DISTRIBUTION – PROPOSED RELOCATION

(No. B/183) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the proposed relocation of

the methadone distribution from the Mahebourg Hospital to a dedicated Methadone Distribution Centre in January 2026, he will state where the matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, there are presently two methadone dispensing sites in Mahebourg, namely at Mahebourg Hospital with 363 patients, and Mahebourg Methadone Day Care Centre, through caravan, with 192 patients. Both sites operate between 06.00 a.m. to 08.00 a.m.

Madam Speaker, there have been several requests to delocalise the methadone dispensing site from Mahebourg Hospital to the yard of Mahebourg Methadone Day Care Centre, through caravan, mainly because some patients cause trouble within the hospital premises. However, this relocation cannot be envisaged due to the fact that the total number of methadone beneficiaries taking their doses at the Methadone Day Care Centre would increase to more than 500. This could pose safety issues for staff, beneficiaries as well as the neighbourhood. Moreover, in case of any scuffles or fights, the situation may be more difficult to control since the site where the day care centre is located is small and enclosed by a fencing.

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that a joint technical working group had been set up between the National Agency for Drug Control (NADC), as the apex body looking at the drug scourge, and my Ministry to look into the various aspects regarding methadone dispensing.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Apollon!

Mr Apollon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I already had a meeting with the NADC, where I proposed an old police quarter which is not in use. Can I ask the Minister to consider this old police quarter for the distribution of methadone at Mahebourg?

Mr Bachoo: I will take up this matter with NADC in the forthcoming meeting that we will be having. I will try to propose the site.

Madam Speaker: Yes, Ms Savabaddy!

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister will agree with me that methadone distribution creates a lot of problems in most regions. Has there been any comprehensive study over the situation so as to bring appropriate solutions? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, there is no appropriate solution. In any place or any part of the country, wherever we put up any centre for methadone distribution, we start having complaints as from the following day. So, I do not know where we have to put it up.

In the beginning, it was at the police stations. The police objected to it. We moved to the hospitals, the doctors protested. We moved to some area health centres, there was hue and cry everywhere. These people are patients and need to be treated, and you have to be very careful while dealing with these patients.

Madam Speaker: We have heard you say that before. This is not the first time you are saying this, I think.

Mr Bachoo: There is no other solution. We have to bear with it. We have to live with these patients because, for us, they are patients.

Madam Speaker: Okay, we are done with methadone for the moment!

PQ B/184 has been withdrawn.

PESTICIDES REGULATORY OFFICE – STAFF REDUCTION

(No. B/184) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the Pesticides Regulatory Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the reasons for the reduction in the number of officers posted thereat.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: So, now, we go to Dr. Aumeer!

RENT-TO-OWN SCHEME – ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS, HOUSING UNITS AVAILABILITY & EXPECTED DELIVERY DATES

(No. B/185) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the 'Rent-to-Own' Scheme launched in November 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the number of –

(a) eligible applicants therefor, and

- (b) housing units available thereunder, indicating the respective locations and expected delivery dates thereof.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, social housing units are reserved for applicants with a monthly household income of up to Rs48,000. However, there are applicants who, though eligible for a housing unit, do not have the repayment capacity, or in many cases due to unfavourable MCIB reports, are unable to secure a loan from financial institutions, or cannot benefit from mortgage facilities from the NHDC.

So as not to debar these applicants from owning a housing unit, since November 2025, the NHDC has, following Government approval, introduced a new financing scheme based on the Rent-to-Own mechanism to cater for such type of beneficiaries. The Rent-to-Own Scheme, basically, enables those beneficiaries to rent a housing unit for an initial period of five years with the right to exercise a purchase option anytime.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the NHDC is, at present, according to the information given to me at my Ministry, not in a position to provide the exact number of eligible applicants, as the assessment of beneficiaries is still in progress.

So, I am personally not very happy not to give information of that nature because I have the information, Madam Speaker. I have the information as at the 18th of March 2026 as to how many people on “Rent-to-Own” are being considered. So, allow me to give it. Because you see, it’s not in the habit of previous governments to be transparent and I love the idea of being transparent.

So, in spite of what I am told here, I will give the information and it is as follows –

- For Olivia, there are 212 units, as at 18 March for loan, mortgage credit facility and the evaluation of mortgage for rent or rent-to-own by NHDC – 70 are under evaluation;
- For Grand Bel Air – 33 being evaluated;
- For Valetta – 0;
- For Mare D’Albert – 14;
- For Henrietta 3 – 0;
- For Malherbes – 14;
- For Pointe aux Piments –33;

- For Reunion Maurel – 26.

So, out of the 1,264 units in those places I made mention, there are 190 that are being evaluated for mortgage/rent to own.

So, with regard to part (b), there are no specific number of housing units that are earmarked for rent-to-own. In fact, it is for applicants who are *de facto* eligible but have not been able to secure a loan from lending institutions. It is those who will have then the choice to opt for this scheme. So, the question of the respective location and expected delivery date does not arise at this point in time. I would like to add that this is, – and I am very proud of this particular scheme, I must admit, this Rent-to-Own Scheme, I am personally very proud of it because I came up with the idea and I am thankful to all my colleagues in Cabinet for having supported this idea and approved this scheme. Some people like to pretend as though that they had that idea but then again, I mean we have a lot of pretenders around. Let them be pretenders. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: It sounds like a song.

Mr Mohamed: It is!

Madam Speaker: Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry have any special priority scheme for those who have lost their property overnight due to natural calamities, particularly if they fall in the category of very low income or even on the list of the NEF? Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: In fact, I turn around here and no pun intended, I turned to my left and I see my good friend the hon. Minister Subron. In fact, it concerns several Ministries who work together and as we speak the whole idea is – do we have a housing bank or a stock of houses that we can send people to? And the answer is very simple – no, we don't.

So, what happens is that we have to look around and look for those houses, that's why we have come up with, there is another question that the hon. Anquetil had put to me here but very rapidly, the *maison de transition* – this is what I have come up with and I have already informed Cabinet about that only two weeks back. We are going to work together with the hon. Ministers, both Subron and Madam Navarre-Marie. Why? Because situations like this, we will have to find a solution, it will be the *maison de transition*.

So, I hope that very quickly we will be able to come up with solutions of this nature. The second aspect, allow me to say that, there are many government buildings that are left and unused. You see?

So, in the recent past, many Ministers liked to hold on to properties that vested with their Ministry and don't let it go. But this is not the case with this Government. In this Government, it is clear; it is a team that is working and that team has decided to help one another out. When there are government buildings that are left unused and unutilised, how we can put it to the use of the people, convert into *maison d'urgence*, *maison de transition*, used for people who urgently need it under the several Ministries. This is how we work together. So, for those reasons, I must say that the outlook is very good. The outlook is positive because those are issues that were never addressed in the past and it will be addressed now. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: You are okay Dr.?

Mr Ramkalawon!

Mr Ramkalawon: Hon. Minister, according to this scheme, do you have any fast track for women who have been victims of domestic violence or single mothers or financially in difficulties?

Mr Mohamed: As I have said, in the hardship criteria, we give priority to single mothers. I underline the fact that they are mothers. What it entails is that they have children and those children have to be catered for, they have to be cared for. My colleagues the hon. Minister, Ms Navarre-Marie, and the hon. Minister of Social Security, Mr Subron, both of them are working closely with us. We are working together in order to address those urgent issues.

So, yes, they are within the criteria. I also had someone who said: why am I giving priority or why are we giving priority to single mothers? In fact, it's not a question of being priority or not, it is showing that we have a heart and, in this side, we have a heart. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: *Les enfants d'abords!* Okay I think now we move on to Dr. Ms Daureeawo!

**RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES – REGISTRATION, INSPECTIONS & POLICY
FRAMEWORK**

(No. B/186) **Dr. Ms R. Daureawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the residential care homes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Residential Care Home Board, information as to the –

- (a) current number thereof being –
 - (i) registered, and
 - (ii) unregistered;
- (b) frequency of inspections carried out thereat, indicating the number of cases of non-compliance or abuse detected in the course thereof and the actions taken in relation thereto in each case, and
- (c) policy framework put in place to ensure compliance with hygiene and safety standards for residents.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, given the issue to be addressed, I am seeking your indulgence to enable me to provide a more elaborate reply to this question.

I wish to inform the House that in accordance with Section 12 of the Residential Care Homes Act 2003, the Residential Care Home Board may, upon application, grant or refuse a license to a person who intends to operate a residential care home. A license issued is valid for a period of one year and shall be renewed for successive periods of one year upon application made by a licensee. The Residential Care Home Board was last reconstituted in September 2025.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that as at date, 22 Charitable Institutions and 63 Private Residential Care Homes are registered with my Ministry. I am tabling the full list of the Registered Institutions.

Out of the total of 85 licenses, the licenses of 7 Charitable Institutions and 8 Private Residential Care Homes are under process for renewal.

I am further informed that for the last five years, only 3 Private Residential Care Homes have ceased operations.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that during my tenure as Minister, my Ministry has received 11 cases of unregistered/illegal homes as at date. I am tabling the full list of the reported case of unregistered and illegal homes.

During this period, out of the 11 cases, my Ministry has had 3 important cases to deal with –

- Case 1: Occurred on 09 May 2025 at Fieldview Care Home situated at Maison Blanche, Mon Goût, Pamplémousses.
- Case 2: Occurred on 07 November 2025 – a suspected illegal Residential Home villa located at Pereybere.
- Case 3: During this month, on the 10 March 2026 at Mon Destin Residential Care Home located at Forest- Side, where a murder case occurred.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in accordance with *Section 20(3) of the Residential Care Homes Act 2003*, officers from the Welfare and Elderly Protection Unit (WEPU) of my Ministry may at all times enter and inspect any building, premises, means of transport and any other facility which are used for the purposes of a Residential Care Home.

Officers of the unit effect monthly visits in registered private homes; and twice monthly in charitable institutions to ensure cleanliness, safety, food quality and proper care of the residents. Surprise checks are also effected in residential care homes to detect any case of abuse.

I am informed that for year 2025, my Ministry has effected 1044 visits and registered 5 cases of elderly abuse, which are being monitored.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I must first say that the Junior Minister and myself were shocked to note that though provisions have been made in the Residential Care Homes Act 2003 to establish contraventions and to institute proceedings for any breach of conditions of a license, the existing law has not been fully applied for years, certainly for at least the last 10 years, prior to our taking the office. No rigid corrective action has been taken against Homes in cases of non-compliance. It is clear that the responsible unit was not properly resourced and trained.

Furthermore, policy wise, let me inform the House of 10 important measures –

- 1) Since I took office, cases of ill-treatments and operation of illegal homes have been promptly and duly reported to the Police and the FCC. The case of Fieldview has been reported and the case of Pereybere has been duly reported;
- 2) A 2 months moratorium period was provided to enable both reporting and regularisation of illegal homes;
- 3) Following the above, a new protocol has been designed to establish clear guidelines and courses of actions to follow in respect of complaints received regarding residential care homes, and for handling cases of abuse and illegal homes;
- 4) A Ministerial Committee was instituted in this context, to ensure transfers of residents from potential illegal homes, to safe places;
- 5) A new Board under the Residential Care Homes Act 2003 was put in place in September as I said, and is now fully operational;
- 6) After the very disturbing events reported at Mon Destin Home, Curepipe, this month –
 - (a) The Residential Care Home Board has promptly met on 18 March 2026 and acted upon the advice of the SLO on 23 March 2026 to declare that the Mon Destin Residential Care Home located in Forest- Side, was in an illegal situation;
 - (b) I have immediately directed the WEPPU to conduct a full audit of all Residential Homes in Mauritius.
 - (c) I am writing to the Commissioner of Police to conduct joint inquiries, with the Ministry, under Section 20 of the Residential Care Home Act 2003. This section was never applied previously.
- 7) My Ministry is also working on the Terms of Reference to appoint a team of consultants to audit and make recommendations to fundamentally review the whole system of residential care home in Mauritius;
- 8) As a transition, my Ministry is working, on urgent transitional amendments to be brought to the Residential Care Homes Regulations 2005, to ensure that all licensed homes provide a list of relevant

information on their residents on a regular basis to my Ministry, more so, that at present the police is suspecting cases of human trafficking.

- 9) In the immediacy, the Cabinet recently has agreed to the Proclamation of Section 9 of Protection of Elderly People Act (PEPA), which will allow for better protection of the elderly.
- 10) In parallel, my Ministry is preparing institutional changes and budget proposals for the massive training of carers to provide their service to both Residential Care Homes institutions and at domicile care.

As per policy of my Ministry, intensive consultation will take place in the preparation of the new measures announced.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that the Mauritian society is facing major challenges with social mutation underway in recent years.

The shift in the family structure, from extended to nuclear family, compounded with aging population, with significant emigration of our youth and adults, with housing crisis, and with working time pattern, are concurrently –

- Causing serious caring issues for our elderly and people with disabilities and mental health issues, and
- Causing serious caring and nurturing issues for our youth, aggravated by the drug problem in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, our society and institutions have not dedicated the proper attention and resources to these social mutations. Now, the very future of our society will depend on us addressing these fundamental challenges.

This is my mission and that of the Junior Minister, and of this Government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Yes, Dr. Ms. Daureeawo, you are, okay?

Hon. First Member for Savanne.

I am sorry. Can we backpedal?

J'introduis une nouvelle méthode. I am sorry I missed Mr Rookny; I did not see him. I am sorry, Mr Babajee.

Mr Rookny, but you have to speak out.

Mr Rookny: I will. That's so kind of you. Could the hon. Minister please advise how many licenses have been given for the construction or establishment of new residential care homes over the last two years?

Mr Subron: I have the figures since the new board has been appointed.

Since September 2025, the new board has approved 70 licences, out of which, 68 licences have been issued as at date. The 70 approvals are detailed as follows –

- 64 renewals of licences;
- 6 new licences, and
- 2 licences which were applied for what is called the INS principle. Approval has been received by the board and has not been granted by my Ministry for noncompliance with law, the Residential Care Home Act 2023.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Thank you so much. Mr Babajee. I am trying to be as fair as I can.

May I, since we are on this issue because we had a problem the other day with one other member who tried to catch my eye; sometimes it's better to catch my ear than my eye.

Thank you.

Now, Mr Babajee, the floor is yours.

BLACK RIVER – AVAILABLE FOOTBALL GROUNDS – INFRASTRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

(No. B/187) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Black River district, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the number of football grounds available thereat, indicating the number thereof which are fully operational, indicating the infrastructural conditions thereof in each case, and

- (b) whether consideration will be given for the construction of football grounds at Le Morne, Chamarel, Case Noyale and Rivière Noire, respectively.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, with regard part(a) of the question, I am informed that there are currently 17 football grounds in the district of Black River. Out of these, 12 falls under the responsibility of the District Council of Black River, 3 are privately owned and 2 fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource.

Out of the 17 football grounds, 16 are fully operational and in good condition while the Albion football ground is presently undergoing upgrading works. I am tabling the detailed list thereof indicating the location, ownership, operational status, condition and facilities available at each site.

I am further informed that upgrading works at the Albion football ground comprising fencing and boundary wall construction, were awarded on 03 December 2025 for a contract sum of Rs5.7 million and are being implemented as scheduled with completion expected by end of April 2026.

While most of the football grounds are operational, I wish to highlight that not all are equipped with complete amenities such as lighting, fencing, cloakroom, and ancillary facilities.

These gaps have already been identified and are being addressed progressively through planned upgrading programmes and future budgetary provision.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised as follows, with respect to Le Morne, a project for the construction of a new football ground has been clearly identified and proposed under the capital project 2026-2027 for an estimated amount of Rs125 million.

The project is comprehensive in nature and includes –

- relocation of high voltage overhead cables;
- construction of retaining walls;
- draining system due to site constraints,
- cut and fill works;
- provision for full modern facilities, including fencing, lighting, bleachers, cloakroom, parking, and associated amenities.

However, implementation of the project is subject to completion of land acquisition procedures, which are initiated since 2023, and are currently being processed at the level of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. This is a statutory prerequisite. Once same is finalised, the project will proceed without any further delay.

I also wish to emphasise that in the meantime, residents of Le Morne are not deprived of access up to football ground. They are currently making use of an existing football ground within the locality.

Madam Speaker, as regards Chamarel, I am informed that the project was initiated in October 2020, but encountered serious implementation issues, including non-performance of the initial contractor, which led to the termination of the contract in April 2022. Subsequently, the project was restructured and implemented in phases to safeguard public funds and ensure proper delivery.

Works relating to drainage, retaining walls and partial boundary infrastructure have already been completed through subsequent contracts. I am further informed that the remaining components required to render the football ground fully operational include –

- Completion of boundary wall;
- Fencing on remaining sides;
- Provision of lighting facilities;
- Laying of top soil and grass, and
- Construction of cloakroom, parking and associated amenities.

In this regard, a provision of Rs25 million has been proposed under the capital project 2026-2027 to complete the outstanding works and ensure that the facility becomes fully operational.

Madam Speaker, as regards Case Noyale, I am informed that the locality already has access to a football ground situated at Avenue Rose near volleyball pitch which is privately owned by South West Safari, but currently being used by the inhabitants.

Similarly, with regard to Rivière Noire, I am informed that the region already benefits from two existing football grounds, namely at Grande Rivière Noire and Petite Rivière Noire. Both are under the responsibility of the District Council and are currently being used by the public.

Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that government is adopting a structured and responsible approach in the development of sports infrastructure, with projects being implemented in line with funds availability from the Ministry of Finance, under the capital project programme and based on the established priorities of the district council.

In this regard, close collaboration at the local level remains essential. I would encourage the hon. Member to liaise with the Chairperson and the district council so that projects may be planned and implemented quickly in the best interests of the communities concerned.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jugurnauth!

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that at the Tamarin Football Playground, there is a community health centre where every day, patients and doctors also use this as parking? The space is in a very bad condition, and the pitch also. Will the hon. Minister apply some rules? What will be done in the future?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Wochit: Madam Speaker, for the Tamarin Football Ground, we have an upcoming project – fencing and boundary walls on one side only. I have all the information concerning the Tamarin Football Ground.

If you come up with a substantive question in the next meeting, I can give you more information concerning this one.

Madam Speaker: Will that be okay? But regarding the question of parking of vehicles?

Mr Wochit: Sorry?

Madam Speaker: On the football ground.

Mr Wochit: Yes, but only the information that...

Madam Speaker: Are you aware?

Mr Wochit: No. We can check it.

Mr Jugurnauth: Madam Speaker, concerning the project of Chamarel Football Ground, will the hon. Minister inform the House about the name of the contractor who carried out the work in 2020? What were the costs when he left the site?

Madam Speaker: I am allowing you because it is the same region, but how will the Minister know all this? I am not sure! It is not directly related.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, for Chamarel, the contract was awarded to Pybig Construction Ltd. for an amount of Rs4.2 million.

Madam Speaker: I am sure everybody understands, but I do not. Does not matter! Are you happy with that answer?

Mr Jugurnauth: Sure.

Madam Speaker: Okay, can we move on? I mean happy that he has given you an answer.

Yes, hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES - REGISTERED FARMERS & SUPPORT SCHEMES

(No. B/188) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to small farmers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, information as to the number of registered farmers from mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues Island and Agalega, respectively, over the past five years, indicating the number of farmers of Rodrigues Island –

- (a) awaiting renewal of their farmers' cards and the expected delivery dates thereof, and
- (b) benefiting from the Smart Agri-Business Programme, the Farm Production Support Programme, the Risk Management Programme and the Quality-of-Life Programme, respectively.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. François.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that farmers are registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund in line with Section 16 of the Small Farmers Welfare Fund. Upon their registration, the farmers are provided with a farmer's card which give them access to facilities and schemes provided by government.

The farmer's card is renewed every two years. There are currently 12,047 farmers registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund in Mauritius, and 1,067 farmers registered

from Rodrigues. There are no farmers from Agalega registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will table the number of farmers registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund for Mauritius and Rodrigues for the last five years, as compiled by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund.

As regards part (a), Madam Speaker, I am informed that as at date the Small Farmers Welfare Fund has already sent the 1,067 farmer's card to the Commission for Agriculture of Rodrigues Regional Assembly for distribution to all farmers who had applied for renewal.

Now, the renewal of the farmer's card for additional farmers would be considered as and when they would apply for renewal. I understand that the Commission for Agriculture has already delivered 609 cards, and the remaining will be delivered within the next two weeks.

With regard to part (b), Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund that a total of 412 registered farmers has benefited from the Small Agri-business Programme, the Farm Production Support Programme, the Risk Management Programme, and the Quality-of-Life Programme over the last five years. I will table the details of all the beneficiaries.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. François!

Mr François: Merci, l'honorable ministre, pour la rapidité dans l'action après ma question de vendredi dernier. Hier, à Rodrigues, quelques éleveurs et planteurs ont reçu leurs cartes tant attendues depuis longtemps.

An hon. Member: Bravo!

Madam Speaker: Wow!

Mr François: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut confirmer à la Chambre si la SFWF remettra des cartes *to all the 1,423 planters, the 424 éleveurs* et les 3,027 éleveurs et planteurs de Rodrigues d'ici la fin de l'année ?

Dr. Boolell: This is a tall question, but if you insist and you impress upon me, I will certainly convey the strong signals of a friend and tell them that they have to bow to the legitimate request made by the hon. Member from Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker: Wow! Thank you, hon. Minister. Thank you. I like this!

Mr François: Hon. Minister, may I know how much it costs, if you have the information, per year by a farmer for their registration with the SFWF to obtain a farmer's card.

Dr. Boolell: I will advise you to peruse the document what I will lay on the Table.

Madam Speaker: *Il est insatiable.*

The hon. Second for Member Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien!

BATS – POPULATION INCREASE – CULLING EXERCISE

(No. B/189) Mr T. Apollo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to bats, he will state –

- (a) whether an increase in the population thereof has been observed, and
- (b) when the last culling exercise thereof was carried out, and
- (c) the measures being envisaged to address the impact thereof on local fruits.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, hon. Member. Now, Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) the of the question, I am informed that the National Parks and Conservation Service that has been carrying out surveys on the Mauritius fruit-bat population since 2006.

Although, the local bat population has increased from 22,000 in 2006 to around 132,000 in 2020, it has remained stable over the last five years. The most recent survey undertaken in November and December 2025 recorded approximately 120,000 bats across the island.

As regard part (b) of the question, I am informed that the last culling exercise was conducted by the previous government in November and December 2020 whereby 1,160 Mauritius fruit-bat were killed.

Madam Speaker, the House will note that the Mauritius fruit-bat is listed as endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species and is one of the last remaining native mammals surviving in the Republic of Mauritius.

As regards part (c) of the question, it is a fact that the Ministry has to respond to legitimate concern of farmers regarding damages caused by bats. A grant of 50% is offered by Government and the cost of anti-bird nets to cover a maximum of five trees for backyard and 60 tree for orchards.

An amount of Rs22.5 million has been disbursed by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute to 2,976 beneficiaries under the Fruit Protection Scheme over a period of November 2024 to March 2026.

I am advised that these nets have proven to be an effective means of control against the damages caused by fruit-bats. Nonetheless, following complaints received from planters, other measures such as ultrasound devices and the use of repellents are being envisaged to deter and mitigate caused by bats to fruit crops.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: All right? Okay!

Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes!

LATE MRS Y. B – 3-YEAR-OLD GIRL & 7-MONTH-OLD BABY BOY – SAFETY & PROTECTION

(No. B/190) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the three-year-old girl and the seven-month-old baby boy of late Mrs Y. B. she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the arrangements made to ensure the safety and protection thereof and the assistance extended for the well-being thereof.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madam Speaker, on 10 March 2026, it was reported in the press that Mrs Y. B. was missing and her partner Mr A.R. was arrested as there was suspected foul play. I am informed that Mrs Y. B. was a victim of domestic violence which was reported to my Ministry to the Family Support Services of Goodlands. She was granted an interim protection order which she later withdrew.

On 11 March 2026, following the arrest of Mr A.R., father of two minors, the officers of my Ministry immediately enquired on the whereabouts of the children. They were informed by *La Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille* that the children were under the care of one Mrs D. N., a friend of the biological father and that Mrs D. N., together with the minors were currently at the Major Crime Investigating Team (MCIT).

On the same day, the officers of my Ministry attended the office of the MCIT for a psychosocial assessment of the minors in the presence of Mrs D. N. as she had been designated at that time by the biological father of two children to act as the responsible party for the two minors.

I am further informed that later on during that day, the paternal uncle of the minors Mr U.R. attended the MCIT's office where he expressed the wish to look after the minors.

Madam Speaker, on 13 March 2026, the officers of my Ministry effected a site visit at the residence of Mr U. R., at Eau Coulée for a psychological assessment. The paternal uncle, Mr U. R., had informed that the biological father had asked him to look after his children. Consequently, the paternal uncle was entrusted the care and responsibility of the minors.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that on 16 March 2026, the paternal uncle was contacted for an update on the present status of the children and my officers were informed that both minors were faring well.

On 20 March 2026, my officers conducted a home visit and the children were found to be faring well. The paternal uncle reiterated his willingness to care for the minors and requested information with regard to the legal procedures to be followed for their custody.

An appointment was scheduled by the officers of my Ministry with the legal resource person on 26 March 2026 which Mr U. R, the paternal uncle attended. Legal advice was provided to him. Continuous psychological support is being provided to the minors and close follow-up is being maintained in this case.

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. Je remercie la Ministre pour sa réponse. L'honorable Ministre peut-elle informer la Chambre si l'oncle paternel qui prend actuellement en charge les deux enfants de Madame B., victime de violence domestique, a lui-même un enfant et le cas échéant, quelle mesure concrète de soutien son ministère a mise en place pour garantir le bien de cette enfant dans ce nouveau cadre familiale ?

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, je suis au courant. Selon les informations, c'est vrai que l'oncle paternel a un enfant, un adolescent de 16 ans, mais le fait est que l'oncle a demandé à ce que les enfants lui soient confiés et nous suivons les enfants, les psychologues de mon ministère suivent les enfants et nous sommes satisfaits que les enfants sont entre de bonnes mains.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre peut-elle informer la Chambre pendant combien de temps l'oncle paternel pourra assumer seul la prise

en charge financière de ces deux enfants. Alors qu'aucune aide financière du ministère n'a à ce jour été accordée ?

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, je ne suis pas en présence d'une demande dans ce sens mais je pense que s'il y a une telle demande, cela aurait dû être adressée au ministère de la Sécurité sociale.

Madam Speaker: On la laisse terminer d'abord.

Ms Anquetil: *Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.* Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether her Ministry is envisaging to put in place a clear-cut policy to ensure that the children in general are not separated as to fully protect their well-being and best interest.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms Navarre-Marie: Madame la présidente, c'est effectivement la politique du gouvernement, du ministère, c'est à dire de ne pas séparer les *siblings*.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Mr Juman: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre peut-elle informer la Chambre du nombre de visites effectuées par les psychologues de son ministère aux enfants ?

Ms Navarre-Marie: Il y a eu selon mes informations, Madame la présidente, pas moins de trois visites aux enfants.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. Now we go to the hon. First Member for Rodrigues, hon. Ms Collet!

RODRIGUES – BLUE ECONOMY PROMOTION – IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES – RRA COLLABORATION

(No. B/191) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research whether, in regard to the initiatives being led by his Ministry to overcome implementation challenges in the promotion of the blue economy, he will state the benefits for Rodrigues in terms of scientific, technological, innovative and capacity-building initiatives and opportunities for Rodriguan stakeholders in sustainable ocean resource management, following the recent holding of the Blue Economy Roadmap Consultative Workshop, indicating whether any collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in relation thereto is being envisaged.

Dr. Sukon: Madam Speaker, let me say it from the outset that Rodrigues is not an afterthought in our blue economy agenda but rather a priority. Rodrigues, as a partner, is a living laboratory of innovation, resilience and opportunity.

I wish to inform the hon. Member that the Blue Economy Roadmap Consultative Workshop was held under the purview of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries. My Ministry was not the lead convener for that workshop. However, that does not mean that my Ministry has left Rodrigues aside. Through the Higher Education Commission, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council and the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology Ltd, my Ministry is already supporting Rodrigues through concrete, measurable and ongoing actions.

Madam Speaker, on research investment during the five-year period ending in 2025, the MRIC supported 19 research and innovation projects in Rodrigues across blue economy, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience, mobilising approximately Rs14.6 million in project value. That is not only symbolism but investment. These projects include the –

- Underwater Marine Eco-trail, supporting sustainable marine tourism;
- marine ecosystem studies by Shoals Rodrigues;
- the Road Blue Forward Initiative by Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd, and
- scientific work by Ter-Mer Rodriguez on lagoon dynamics and the socioeconomic implications of sand extraction.

Madam Speaker, on stakeholder partnership, the MRIC has signed an MOU with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and operates a dedicated Rodrigues branch anchored on the ground, close to Rodriguan realities. Through the *Assises de la Recherche et de l'innovation 2.0*, conducted jointly with the RRA, five innovation grants, totalling Rs4.99 million have been awarded with eight further applications currently under review. Rodrigues is not being asked simply to receive policy but Rodrigues is being empowered to shape it. On infrastructure, the MRIC is developing the Rodrigues Blue Innovation Hub to support marine research, seafood value addition, SME development and ecosystem monitoring, building on existing SEMPA facilities and the MRIC branch.

At the scientific frontier, MIBL's Blue Reef Proposal targets climate resilient coral reef restoration through marine genomics, bioprospecting and local coral nurseries, offering Rodriguan researchers, fishers and young people hands-on training in cutting edge science.

On human capital, 624 Rodriguan students are currently enrolled in our higher education institution, out of which, 589 in publicly funded institution. They are building the very expertise that will drive Rodrigues' own blue economy future.

Madam Speaker, collaboration with Rodrigues Regional Assembly is not only envisaged, it is already happening. It is already producing results and it will be further strengthened because Rodrigues must not stand at the edge of the blue economy but rather be at its heart.

Madam Speaker: Yes, happy? Good! Yes?

Mr François: Madam Speaker, let me just put a supplementary.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: *Lui il se fait entendre ! Voilà!*

Mr François: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer to this pertinent question. Will the hon. Minister confirm whether his Ministry will collaborate with the MRIC to reinforce the suboffice thereat, so that we have many more researchers, many more human resources?

Dr. Sukon: Definitely, as you are aware we had a fire there. So, we are ensuring the Rodrigues branch of MRIC which will soon become the branch of NRII, will be consolidated with additional officers.

Madam Speaker: Okay, good. Now, we leave Rodrigues? No, we do not. The hon. Second Member for Rodrigues!

RODRIGUES – LAND DRAINAGE MASTER PLAN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT PROJECTS

(No. B/192) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the implementation of the Land Drainage Master Plan and National Development Unit Projects for Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

Mr Guinness: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Land Drainage Authority has awarded a contract to Setec Mauritius in February 2025 for the formulation of a Land Drainage Master Plan for Rodrigues, with the view to building climate resilience and reduce Rodrigues' vulnerability to flooding, taking into consideration the island's specific topographical, climatic and developmental context.

The LDMP aims at proposing a conceptual framework for flood risk management that will guide long term sustainable development and reduce Rodrigues' exposure to the impacts of climate change. A kick-off meeting was held on 13 March 2025 and the inception report was presented on 23 July 2025, in the presence of several stakeholders, including –

- myself;
- the Deputy Chief Commissioner;
- the Commissioner for Public Infrastructure;
- the Commissioner for Agriculture, and

representatives from –

- the National Development Unit;
- Land Drainage Authority;
- the Road Development Authority;
- the Rodrigues Public Utilities Commission;
- the Cadastral Unit of Rodrigues, and
- Setec amongst others.

The presentation outlined the scope of the LDMP and feedback from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly was also sought with the view to ensuring that the deliverables were aligned with the specific requirements and development vision of Rodrigues. The Inception Report was officially handed over to the Chief Commissioner and the Deputy Chief Commissioner during the presentation. I am informed by the LDA that the final report is expected to be submitted by June 2026.

Madam Speaker, as regards the projects being implemented by the National Development Unit, a total of three drain projects to the tune of some Rs174 million are currently ongoing and are at 41% completion. Two projects have been planned for implementation by the NDU in the next financial year, namely –

- (i) raising of fords at Rivière Cocos, and
- (ii) raising of fords at Baie du Nord.

It is expected that the bidding procedures should in principle be completed by October 2026, subject to financial clearance. I am also informed that six projects are under preparation and the study is expected to be completed by June 2027.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, yes, hon. Ms Collet. We still remain in Rodrigues.

**RODRIGUES – MINISTER OF EDUCATION’S MISSION – FINDINGS &
OUTCOMES – MEASURES IDENTIFIED**

(No. B/193) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to his recent mission to Rodrigues, he will state the objectives, findings and outcomes thereof, indicating the measures identified, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to strengthen educational performance and providing support to the students and their respective families.

Dr. Gungapersad: Madam Speaker, on various occasions, I have highlighted the importance that my Ministry gives to our children in Rodrigues. That is why the specificities of Rodrigues are always taken onboard when policies are formulated or when it comes to ensuring that these policies are implemented satisfactorily. That is why I undertook an official visit to Rodrigues Island from 20 to 24 February 2026 to *inter alia* take stock of progress achieved in the implementation of the Foundation Programme in Literacy, Numeracy and Skills.

Madam Speaker, during my visit, I participated in a round-table discussion organised by the Deputy Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and attended by the Departmental Head of Education, Rectors, Deputy Rectors, and Senior Educators of the secondary schools. The deliberations focused on the rationale and philosophy behind the Foundation Programme and the importance of setting up of a monitoring committee at school level to follow-up the teaching and learning aspects of the programme.

Madam Speaker, during the meeting, I also apprised concerned stakeholders that the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) is presently developing a new elective module, namely Ocean Resources and Fishing for Grade 9 students in Rodrigues. They were also informed of the pathways open to these students after the completion of the National Foundation Certificate of Education. In the same context, I proceeded with the launching of

some FPLNS workbooks for students of Grade 7 to 9, which have been developed by the MIE.

Madam Speaker, I also took the opportunity of my visit to discuss several critical issues concerning the education sector in Rodrigues with the relevant stakeholders.

These included –

- (i) the possibility of introducing a rotation system for Secondary Educators in schools, under the supervision of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO);
- (ii) the relocation of the Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centre due to its difficult access for students;
- (iii) the planning requirements arising from the increasing demand for courses at the MITD.

Madam Speaker, I also visited the four laureates of the 2025 HSC cohort from Rodrigues, and their parents, at their respective residences. My Ministry also hosted a reception in the honour of the four laureates in Rodrigues itself. This event was attended by the Chief Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and also, responsible for education, and even the four Members of Parliament, here, hon. François, hon. Ms Collet, hon. Ms Henriette-Manan, and Mr Léopold.

Madam Speaker, school visits were also part of my agenda. Unfortunately, due to the presence of Cyclone Horacio in the region, a Cyclone Warning Class II was in force, as a result, schools had to close down and the visits had to be cancelled. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Ms Collet, you are happy?

Last question is for hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil!

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS – FOOD SECURITY – LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION – MEASURES

(No. B/194) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to

food security concerns amidst the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, he will state the measures being implemented to boost local food production, particularly, in terms of increasing self-sufficiency in staple crops, supporting farmers with resources, new technologies and diversification.

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to PQs B/194, B/201 and B/209 together as they relate to the same subject matter. But I will seek the indulgence of the House as the reply is quite lengthy.

Madam Speaker, during the period 20...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am sorry. Would it not be possible to communicate the reply?

Dr. Boolell: You want me to circulate it?

Madam Speaker: Circulate it? No, you do not want. You want to question him? Alright! But we do not have much time!

Dr. Boolell: I cannot, unfortunately, give an abridged version of my reply. Thank you very much.

During the period 2014-2024, the priority of the then regime was land speculation. Consequently, there was massive encroachment upon fertile and prime agricultural land. Post COVID-19, food production in Mauritius should have been a national priority. Unfortunately, it was not.

Our government is restoring food security as a central pillar of national policy. My Ministry has adopted a proactive and a resilient-driven strategy to protect the food supply of the country in the face of global uncertainties. Rs800 million has been allocated to the Ministry during the Financial Year 2025-2026 to support farmers, planters, breeders through various schemes and assistance programmes. These, amongst others, include sheltered farming, purchase of agricultural equipment, installation of CCTV camera, seed subsidies and reengineering of accompanying measures.

The Ministry organised the *Assises de l'Agriculture* in January 2026. The report of the *assises* will feed into a food security programme for the year 2026-2029. Discussions during

the *assises* focused on unlocking new resources, identification of new technologies as well as how to achieve diversification to reduce dependency on existing markets. Six strategic priorities were, accordingly, identified during the forum –

- (i) Food sovereignty and security;
- (ii) Agriculture/climate and environment nexus;
- (iii) Environment/plant/animal health;
- (iv) Value chain and youth engagement;
- (v) Technology and innovation, and
- (vi) Good governance and institutional coordination and policy coherence and financing.

As soon as the war situation in Iran unfolded, Madam Speaker, I convened an emergency coordination meeting on 03 March 2026 with the relevant technical services and institutions of my Ministry. The utmost priority is for the achievement of quick wins and making sure our local produce is readily available for sale, given the numerous uncertainties.

In this context, an action plan has already been prepared by the Ministry regarding immediate actions or low-hanging fruits, medium-term measures and longer strategies that will be considered in view of the conflict in the Middle East or Gulf countries.

I, therefore, wish to reassure the House and the public at large that in the immediate future, there is no shortage of affordable vegetables and staple vegetables like onions, potatoes and garlic. There is full supply of fish, poultry meat and eggs from local farms. Moreover, increase in quantities of venison meat will be available on a yearly basis.

The Agricultural Marketing Board has already secured additional seed potatoes from France and Netherlands, which are expected to arrive in May 2026, allowing planting to start by early July 2026. This initiative is expected to generate an additional 2,000 tonnes of potatoes over and above the estimated 13,000 tonnes normally produced annually.

As at February 2026, the Barkly Experiment Station has a strategic stock of 2 tonnes of vegetable seeds of more than 20 different types of vegetables that can be used to plant over

an area of around 2,300 arpents. These seeds are being sold to planters at a highly subsidised price.

But we have to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. For example, the National Farmers Union of UK estimates that the world is about to see the biggest spike in food prices since Russian invasion of Ukraine due to the soaring costs of gas, diesel and fertiliser, and the disruption of shipping routes.

Any crisis in the Middle East or Gulf countries sends shockwaves through the global economy. Today's disruption to the gulf oil supply is already bigger than those of 1970's. We have to brace ourselves as most oil crises lead to recession.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is actively focusing on the first two strategic priorities, that is, sovereignty, in order to boost local agriculture production along the agriculture/climate/environment nexus to address climate change. Hence, an emergency plan has been prepared by the Ministry to be implemented in the short-term. The plan focuses on import substitution policies and optimising production under the present challenges.

These programmes include –

- new land resources;
- strategies to boost production of local staples such as potato, sweet potato, cassava, bean fruit;
- a precision farming scheme which will allow entrepreneurs to access emerging technologies such AI-driven precision farming, use of sensors, drones and high-yielding seeds.

May I remind the House that under the Labour-led government, low-glycemic rice was grown in Cluny and on sale in supermarkets. A Household Food Security Scheme will be launched to allow backyard farming.

I will now elaborate on a number of concrete measures which are being implemented, namely –

1. Creation of an agricultural land bank at my Ministry and mobilisation of land by the State Investment Trust, Rose Belle Sugar Estate and Landscape Mauritius Ltd

for the cultivation of potatoes and other strategic crops so as to increase the strategic buffer stocks of essential crops such as potatoes, onions, garlic from six weeks to nine weeks.

2. Provisions of grant provided by Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, and Small Farmers Welfare Fund to help farmers to modernise the agricultural activities, improve both productivity and adopt locally manufactured fertilisers.
3. Distribution to farmers at highly subsidised prices of fast-growing crops such as beans, cowpeas, leafy vegetables, cabbage that can be harvested within two to three months.
4. Strengthening cold chain storage systems and agro-processing capacity for the transformation of key crops in order to reduce post-harvest loses from small farmers and extend the shelf life of agricultural produce. The Ministry is presently engaging with private sector operators such as CopeSud and Best Foods on this issue.
5. Diversification of import sources and procurement arrangement for potatoes, onions and garlic to reduce supply risk.
6. Monitoring of prices in consultation with the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection and to ensure there is no abusive practices.
7. Reliable access to irrigation water and improve agricultural yields by developing irrigation schemes through this Irrigation Authority and encouraging farmers to exploit boreholes in the fields.
8. Improving the ease of doing agri-business through small planters through one stop shop strategy. The Small Farmers Welfare Fund will act as a facilitator.

Madam Speaker, food security also concerns the availability of meat and livestock products. In this regard the Division of Veterinary Services of my Ministry has initiated the diversification of import sources for livestock. The Division has explored the possibility of importing parent poultry stock from Kenya and Zambia.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, may I? We already...time is...

Dr. Boolell: If time is up, I would have circulated. My friend insisted that I should...

Madam Speaker: How long more do you have?

Dr. Boolell: Well, if time is up, time is up, okay. I would circulate.

Madam Speaker: Yes, thank you. We won't be able to have supplementary. Time is up! More than few minutes anyway.

So, time is up now. Thank you very much, hon. Minister, sorry.

Dr. Boolell: That's alright. I am used to that now.

Madam Speaker: It was a very important question. I now have to announce, hon. Members, I have a series of questions that have been withdrawn, of course.

So, now I will list them: B/195, B/196, B/197, B/202, B/204, B/205, B/206, B/207, B/208, B/210, B /211, B/212, B/214, B/215, B/216, B/217, B/219, B/220, B/222, B/223, B/225, B/228 and B/229.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members, I want to tell you that if I close my eyes, it's because of the lights. The Broadcasting lights which you don't get but I get. I will try and get special glasses.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Mohamed seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the National Research and Innovation Institute Bill (No. IV of 2026) was read a first time.

Madam Speaker: I think maybe it would be better at this stage that we break for tea because we don't want the hon. Minister to start and then we stop her in the middle. It's much better.

Thank you very much.

At 4.11 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.52 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister.

Second Reading

**THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, COMBATTING THE FINANCING OF
TERRORISM AND COUNTERING PROLIFERATION FINANCING
(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL**

(No. III of 2026)

Order for second reading read.

(4.52 p.m.)

The Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning (Dr. Ms J. Jeetun):

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that The Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill ((No. III of 2026) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, our financial services sector is at the heart of the Mauritian economy; contributing 12.4% of GDP, employing 20,000 highly skilled professionals directly and many more indirectly, generating 65% of Corporate Tax Revenues and 34% of PAYE revenues. It's a source of pride, strength and stability, enabling us to stand tall in the world.

Our financial services system has not only proved an immense source of prosperity in the past; it is also fundamental to fulfilling our ambitions for the future. So, I stand before this House to present this important Bill, which brings forward a fully comprehensive and forward-looking set of reforms to safeguard the strength, integrity and resilience of our financial services. And this could not be more timely, more relevant or more necessary.

Reaffirming our financial standing, reinforcing our credibility and reminding the world of our commitment to reform in the face of new incoming financial threats. Showing our commitment to combatting money laundering, the financing of terrorism, and the financing of proliferation.

Madam Speaker, the world is changing faster than any of us can imagine. Financial crime is evolving. It's becoming ever more sophisticated, technologically enabled and cross

border. In such an environment, maintaining the status quo is not an option. We must continuously strengthen our legislative and institutional frameworks to remain ahead of emerging risks.

Madam Speaker, at its simplest, this Bill is about protecting Mauritius from dirty money and the harm it brings. Money laundering and the financing of terrorism may sound too technical and daunting to many but these are not distant or abstract concepts. They are what allow crime, corruption, and illegal networks to survive and grow. When illicit money flows unchecked, it does not just affect banks and financial institutions; it distorts our economy, undermines honest businesses, and erodes trust in our institutions.

For a country like Mauritius, whose strength lies in its reputation as a clean, well-regulated and trusted financial centre, this is not a just technical matter; it is a national priority. In an increasingly interconnected world, financial crime is evolving at an unprecedented pace. Illicit financial flows can move rapidly across borders, criminal networks operate with growing sophistication, and new technologies are reshaping the risk landscape. Faced with this, no jurisdiction can afford complacency. It is therefore incumbent upon us to ensure that our legal and institutional frameworks remain robust, adaptive and capable of responding effectively to emerging threats.

Madam Speaker, the global standards in this domain are set by the Financial Action Task Force whose recommendations continue to evolve in response to new risks. As part of its latest round of Mutual Evaluations, the FATF has introduced significant amendments, placing stronger emphasis on effectiveness, risk-based supervision, transparency, international cooperation, and critically, the integration of proliferation financing risks. These developments signal a clear shift. It is no longer sufficient to have laws in place. We must demonstrate that they actually work in practice.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius went on the FATF Grey List in February 2020. Whilst we came out of the Grey List in October 2021, I can say that it can leave lasting damage to our global reputation, so there is no place for complacency. Today, Mauritius stands as a jurisdiction of substance, fully aligned with international standards. We are compliant with 26 out of the 40 FATF recommendations and largely compliant with the remaining 14. This reflects the strength, coherence and maturity of our legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks but in a world where financial crime is becoming more sophisticated and more global, standing still is not an option. If we do not keep improving, we fall behind. This Bill

is therefore about staying ahead, closing gaps, strengthening enforcement, and ensuring that our laws keep pace with new emergent risks.

Madam Speaker, compliance is not the destination; it is the foundation. The focus has now shifted to effectiveness, particularly under the FATF's Immediate Outcomes. In this regard, areas such as supervision, beneficial ownership transparency, financial intelligence, and the confiscation of criminal assets remain key priorities for Government.

In addition, Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, we are facing threats that are evolving, transnational and technologically enabled. Criminal actors and malign state-backed networks exploit opacity, legal ambiguity and delay. They convert illicit proceeds through complex corporate and trust structures. They hide assets behind nominee arrangements. They exploit weaknesses in non-profit and cooperative sectors, and benefit from slow or fragmented cross-agency responses. And, to meet these challenges, we must modernise our statutory framework so that our supervisors, investigators, prosecutors and courts can act swiftly, effectively and fairly.

Madam Speaker, it is precisely within this context that this Bill must be understood. Following the completion of our Second National Risk Assessment in 2025, Mauritius now benefits from a more refined and up-to-date understanding of the money laundering and terrorism financing risks within our jurisdiction. The findings of this assessment have been instrumental in shaping the reforms before this House.

This Bill addresses the gaps identified while also aligning our framework with the latest amendments to the FATF Recommendations. It has been developed through extensive consultations with all competent authorities, regulatory bodies, and key stakeholders, as well as, with international and regional partners including the ESAAMLG Secretariat.

Madam Speaker, the Bill strengthens our risk-based approach by introducing a more dynamic and continuous framework for risk identification and mitigation. It enables targeted and sector-specific assessments and ensures that critical risk information is disseminated effectively across all relevant authorities.

A key feature of this Bill is the full integration of proliferation financing risks within our legislative framework. It introduces a clear statutory definition, imposes obligations on reporting entities to assess and mitigate such risks, and empowers supervisory authorities to ensure proportionate compliance.

Madam Speaker, the Bill also significantly enhances our enforcement and asset recovery capabilities. It strengthens the powers of the Financial Crimes Commission. It introduces mechanisms for the temporary suspension of suspicious transactions. It reinforces provisions for the attachment and confiscation of illicit assets. The principle is simple and firm: crime must not pay.

In parallel, the Bill advances transparency by strengthening beneficial ownership requirements and enhancing accountability within legal persons and arrangements, including trusts. It also introduces a more refined, risk-based approach to the oversight of non-profit organisations, protecting legitimate activities while addressing potential vulnerabilities.

Madam Speaker, an additional and forward-looking reform contained in this Bill is the provision for the establishment of a centralised information management system. This system will consolidate concise, reliable and timely data from all competent authorities into a single, coordinated platform. The importance of such a mechanism cannot be overstated. Effective supervision, risk assessment, policy formulation and enforcement all depend on the availability of accurate and accessible data. By enabling better data integration, analysis and sharing, this measure will significantly enhance our ability to monitor trends, identify risks earlier, support evidence-based decision-making and demonstrate effectiveness under international standards.

Madam Speaker, the reforms extend further to supervisory and regulatory frameworks. They introduce group-wide supervision, enhance the powers of regulators and strengthen coordination across institutions.

They introduce group wide supervision, enhance the powers of regulators and strengthen coordination across institutions. They also address emergent risk including those linked to virtual assets and new technologies, ensuring that our frameworks remain future ready.

Equally, the Bill reinforces both domestic and international corporation through improved information sharing mechanism supported by clear safeguards to ensure confidentiality and proper use.

Madam Speaker, allow me to introduce the Bill clause by clause, explain what these amendments seek to achieve and set out the public interest that underpins these changes. I kindly ask the indulgence of the House given that we are amending 24 existing legislations.

I start with the Bank of Mauritius Act. The amendment in the Bank of Mauritius Act aims at clarifying the bank's confidentiality obligation so that where it is necessary to make a complaint, lodge a report or provide information about a person involved or suspected to be involved in an offence.

Secondly, introducing a transparent administrative sanctions process that requires written notification of the intended sanction. Thirdly, setting out the grounds and terms. Fourthly, affording the licensee 21 days right to make written representations where a sanction may be imposed.

Banking Act, including central bank provisions. The Banking Act is being amended in order to, firstly, clarify the definition of foreign exchange dealer in order to remove licensing and supervision ambiguities.

Extend AML/CFT obligations to explicitly encompass proliferation financing and ensure new products, group programmes and customer due diligence measures reflect this obligation. Thirdly, strengthen confidentiality and information sharing provisions to permit both spontaneous and requested exchanges.

The Companies Act is being amended to provide a more encompassing UBO definition which enhances corporate transparency, improves customer due diligence across reporting sectors and materially assists law enforcement and regulatory tracing.

Madam Speaker, the Co-operatives Act is being amended to empower the Registrar to conduct outreach and training on AML/CFT obligations and require co-operative societies and credit unions to maintain a register of beneficial owners subject to supervisory access with penalties for non-compliance.

The Courts Act is being amended to expand the criteria for referral to the Financial Crimes Division to cover offences involving public officials, high profile penetrators, foreign nationals or where the offence is grave or complex. Require fair and timely determination of matters by providing for expeditious conduct of proceedings *de die in diem*, progression after plea and adjournments only when it is in the interest of justice.

Madam Speaker, the Declaration of Assets Act is being amended to, firstly, permit electronic submission of declarations, broaden definitions, for example, spouse and certain assets classes, and strengthen powers to request supporting information and documents. Secondly, introduce a narrowly framed voluntary disclosure relief for late filers who come

forward before an investigation is underway and increase penalties for deliberate non-compliance.

Madam Speaker, the Environment Act – as environmental crimes can be lucrative and may generate proceeds that feed into broader money laundering schemes, the Environment Act is being amended to introduce an offence of ecocide for unlawful and wanton acts that cause severe widespread or longer-term environmental damage with proportionate fines and custodial penalties of up to 10 years alongside non-criminal remedies such as restoration, compensation and exclusion from public funding.

The Financial Crimes Commission Act is being amended to address operational gaps, improve clarity and enhance effectiveness. The definition of property of corresponding value is being introduced in order to enable recovery where original proceeds of crime cannot be located, traced, dissipated or held by bona fide third party. This significantly strengthens our asset recovery capability in line with international standards.

The amendments also improve coordination between enforcement agencies by removing rigid statutory thresholds for referrals between the Commission and the Police. The provisions relating to unexplained wealth are also strengthened by broadening their scope to include residents and legal persons, and by introducing more flexible evidentiary mechanism to handle complex cases.

Madam Speaker, the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA) is being amended to refine the definition of financial institutions and expand transaction to cover professions and gambling and add clear definitions for non-profit organisation, proliferation financing and virtual assets and virtual assets service providers.

Amendments are also being proposed to –

- require reporting persons to address PF risk;
- mandate a centralised information management system for AML/CFT/CPF data;
- introduce consolidated group supervision;
- improve domestic and international information sharing safeguards, and
- provide procedural fairness and appeal rights for administrative penalties, tighten customer due diligence for existing customers and adjust sectoral reporting thresholds.

The Financial Reporting Act is being amended to provide explicit powers to the Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants to inspect its licensees, enable issuance of remedial directions with procedural safeguards and allow compounding of offences with appropriate oversight and escalation to law enforcement agencies where compounding is declined.

Madam Speaker, the Financial Services Act is being amended to introduce a register of domestic trust and foreign trust having at least one qualified trustee. Clarify that the Commission may facilitate or permit foreign counterparts to conduct group level enquiries and extend supervisory information, exchange powers with safeguard on dissemination.

Madam Speaker, the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act, the Income Tax Act and the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act amendment. The Gambling Regulatory Authority Act, The Income Tax Act and the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act are being amended to require beneficial ownership details at license application stage for gambling operators, introduce cash transaction limits and enhance fiscal investigation powers with carefully circumscribed search and seizure provisions and appropriate safeguards.

Madam Speaker, the National Payment Systems Act is being amended to clarify endorsement and due process by allowing operators, participants and payment service providers to seek judicial review for administrative penalties and actions.

The Real Estate Agent Authority Act is being amended to vest the authority with the responsibility of approving compliance officers in addition to MLROs and deputies, and formalising information sharing arrangements with other bodies for the purpose of tightening AML/CFT oversight, improve inter-agency co-operation and ensuring that transactional actors are properly regulated.

Madam Speaker, the Registration of Associations Act is being amended to –

- (i) empower the Registrar to collect fundraising/financial/programmatic data;
- (ii) enable risk-based inspections and information sharing;
- (iii) provide a right of judicial review against administrative sanctions, and
- (iv) record fundraising/disbursement activity to enhance NPO transparency and TF risk mitigation.

Madam Speaker, the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act is being amended to provide for –

- (i) definition of risk to be expanded to cover proliferation and proliferation financing;
- (ii) and the speeding up of UN sanctions implementation, and strengthen coordination.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the Value Added Tax Act is being amended to secure interagency cooperation while preserving safeguards.

Madam Speaker, if these amendments are enacted and effectively implemented, we can reasonably expect –

- (i) A clear reinforcement in the effectiveness measures to prevent Mauritius being used as conduit for illicit finance by closing identifiable legal gaps;
- (ii) More rapid and effective investigations, better preservation of evidence and timely asset recoveries;
- (iii) Greater resilience of our financial sector and strengthened confidence among international partners and investors;
- (iv) Enhanced transparency and accountability across corporate, cooperative and public office contexts, and
- (v) Stronger compliance with FATF and related international standards, protecting our market access and reputation.

Madam Speaker, this Bill addresses vulnerabilities identified in our National Risk Assessment and in international evaluations. It is urgent because criminal actors do not wait. It is measured because each enhancement is accompanied by safeguards and oversight. Our goal is not to punish legitimate business or hamstring legitimate commerce.

Our goal is to deny criminals, the tools to exploit our jurisdiction, to preserve investor confidence, and to protect citizens from the corrosive effects of illicit finance on public institutions.

Madam Speaker, the amendments I present today are the product of careful diagnosis of real operational problems and of comparative international practice. They are designed to work together – to make our supervisory regime clearer and more effective, to make prosecution and asset recovery practicable, prompt and to ensure our legal framework remains responsive to emerging risks such as virtual assets and proliferation financing.

At every stage, we have built in safeguards to protect procedural fairness and individual rights. I invite hon. Members of the Assembly to examine each amendment on its own merit, to engage constructively with the Bill's provisions, and to support this endeavour so that Mauritius remains a safe, credible and resilient financial jurisdiction. One that protects its citizens, honours its international commitments, and attracts legitimate investment and commerce.

Madam Speaker, we, on our part, we are also investing significantly in capacity building to ensure that the successful implementation of the measures that I have just elaborated.

Through training programmes, outreach initiatives, and collaboration with international institutions and development partners, we are ensuring that both the public and private sectors remain equipped to respond effectively to evolving risks. This whole-of-system approach is critical to sustaining effectiveness.

So, Madam Speaker, taken together, these reforms represent a decisive and strategic step forward. They move us beyond technical compliance towards demonstrable effectiveness. They strengthen our institutions, enhance transparency, and reinforce our ability to prevent and combat financial crime in all its forms. Above all, they reaffirm our commitment to maintaining Mauritius as a credible, resilient and internationally respected financial centre.

Madam Speaker, the message we send today is clear: Mauritius will not be a weak link in the global financial system. We will be a jurisdiction of integrity, of substance, and of trust.

Now, Madam Speaker, before concluding let me make an important final point. I am conscious that whenever we bring forward legislations of this nature, there may be concerns from the industry. Some will say we are over-regulating. Others will argue that we are acting under external pressure. And some may worry about the burden on businesses.

Coming from the private sector myself, I am very conscious of striking the right balance between compliance and an enabling business environment. Let me address this directly. First, this Bill is not about over-regulation – it is about smart and targeted regulation. It is about focusing on real risks, not creating unnecessary obstacles for legitimate operators. Second, this is not about doing things for others. It is about acting in our own national interest.

A strong AML/CFT framework protects Mauritius – our economy, our jobs, and our international standing.

And third, Madam Speaker, this Bill is designed to support – not stifle – genuine businesses. A clean and credible jurisdiction attracts more investment, lowers risk, and creates long-term opportunities for our people and our businesses.

So, Madam Speaker, the choice before us is clear. We can either be reactive – waiting for problems to arise and then scrambling to respond in the future. Or we can take proactive, deliberate and decisive steps to safeguard our health today. This Bill chooses the path of responsibility, credibility and confidence.

It takes decisive actions and it sends a clear and strong message. A clear message to investors – that Mauritius is a strong, safe and secure place to do business. And a clear message to those who would do our nation harm with dirty money or illegal finance – the message is – STAY AWAY! You have no place in Mauritius.

The Mauritian economy is an economy built on integrity, honesty and the rule of law. An economy which is strong, stable and secure. An economy where legitimate enterprise can thrive, not just survive. So, delivering our wealth, our prosperity and an improved quality of life.

Madam Speaker, with that I, now commend this Bill to the House.

Mr Bhagwan rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You did very well!

(5.23 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard): Thank you, Madam Speaker. This Bill is not merely another piece of legislation as it concerns the very integrity of our financial system, the reputation of our international financial centre and ultimately, Madam Speaker, the economic security of every citizen of this country. Like the hon. Minister said earlier, today we are amending 24 Acts. We are being asked to debate on and vote this Bill in very peculiar circumstances.

First, Madam Speaker, recently the hon. Deputy Prime Minister resigned and made some very serious accusations of corruption against political nominees. And a few days ago, I

will have to come back to that, the hon. Minister and therefore a Member of the Cabinet of Ministers made more accusations of corruption and this time, stating that the situation is even worse than what described the former hon. Deputy Prime Minister, and of course, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Prime Minister himself for ten years on still has to explain to our justice system and the population at large where does his Rs220 billion come from.

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, on ne peut pas tolérer des accusations pareilles au sein du Parlement !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Juman, try and be... He is the Leader of the Opposition. Today, he is the Leader of the Opposition.

An hon. Member: So, talk about the Bill.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: We do not know! We do not know! Please, carry on!

Mr Lesjongard: Et en plus de cela, Madame la présidente, notre agence de lutte contre la corruption, je pense, n'est pas armée convenablement puisque le responsable de cette entité ne répond pas aux qualifications requises selon la loi. Et lors d'une *Private Notice Question*, j'avais posé une question supplémentaire à l'honorable Premier ministre concernant le renouvellement du contrat du directeur et tout récemment, malheureusement, le Vice-Premier ministre démissionnaire a confirmé qu'une tactique malsaine avait été utilisée pour le reconduire à ce poste.

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, je n'ai rien contre cette personne. Il a de l'expérience dans le domaine, mais il ne répond pas – une chose est sûre – aux critères établies par la loi.

Madam Speaker, we agree that this Bill is necessary in order to reinforce our preparedness for the next major mutual evaluation by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) scheduled next year. However, as custodians of the public trust, it is our duty as Members of this House to scrutinise not only the intent but also

the substance, the implications and the potential consequences of the legislative framework we are being asked to endorse today. To properly evaluate this Bill, Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we recall with honesty and humility the episode that brought this nation to a very critical juncture, our placement on the FATF's list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring, commonly known as the Grey List in February 2020.

The question, Madam Speaker, why was Mauritius grey listed? These are the reasons pointed by FATF –

- a lack of effective risk-based supervision of financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions;
- limited and timely access to accurate and up to date beneficial ownership information for legal persons and arrangements;
- an insufficient oversight and monitoring of non-profit organisations to prevent their misuse for terrorist financing, and lastly, Madam Speaker,
- a general ineffectiveness in conducting money laundering investigations and prosecutions, particularly those that are complex and transnational in nature.

These are the very reasons we were put on the Grey List and the consequences of that listing, Madam Speaker, were immediate and severe. Our reputation as a prudent, compliant and well-regulated jurisdiction was tarnished. Correspondent banking relationships came under strain with some international financing institutions applying enhanced due diligence or in some cases, derisking by reducing their exposure to Mauritian entities. The cost of compliance for our local financial institutions increased exponentially. Investor confidence, the most fragile of commodities, was shaken. The Grey List was not merely a technical designation, it was an economic sanction imposed by the market with real impacts on jobs, investment and growth.

Madam Speaker, the response of the Government of the day and indeed, of the nation as a whole to this challenge was commendable in its urgency and comprehensiveness. A high-level committee led by the then Prime Minister himself was established to expedite the implementation of the FATF Action Plan. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I understand that this committee does not exist to date. The legislative machinery was activated at an unprecedented pace. Amendments were brought to the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act, the Companies Act, the Financial Services Act and other relevant

enactments. The Financial Intelligence Unit was strengthened in terms of resources and operational capacity. The Registrar of Companies was empowered to enforce the collection and verification of beneficial ownership information. A risk-based supervision framework was developed and rolled out across supervisory authorities, Madam Speaker. Extensive training and awareness programmes were conducted for reporting institutions, legal practitioners, accountants, and other stakeholders. Mauritius also enhanced its international cooperation, engaging proactively with the FATF and ESAAMLG and also other partner jurisdictions.

This concerted effort of Government bore its fruit, Madam Speaker. In October 2021, a mere 20 months after being grey listed, the FATF announced the removal of Mauritius from its list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring. This was a record time for delisting, a testament to the political will at that time and also to the technical competence and national unity that was marshalled to address these deficiencies. It was a victory for Mauritius, a validation of our commitment to international standards and a restoration of confidence in our financial system.

However, Madam Speaker, the removal from the Grey List was not an end point. It was a milestone on a continuous journey. Compliance is not a destination but a process. Mauritius remains under enhanced follow-up by the FATF and is preparing for its third mutual evaluation by the ESAAMLG which is scheduled for next year, that is, in 2027. This upcoming evaluation will be conducted under the FATF's revised methodology of 2022 which places greater emphasis on the effectiveness of the country's AML/CFT/CPF regime, not merely its technical compliance with the 40 recommendations.

It is against this backdrop, Madam Speaker, that we must examine the Bill before us today. How does this Bill, that is, the 2026 Bill compare with the legislative framework that guided us through the grey listing episode and subsequent delisting? What new elements does it introduce, and what are their potential advantages and disadvantages?

I wish to draw the attention of this House to specific clauses that warrant detailed scrutiny. On a general note, Madam Speaker, I have the impression that some institutions, under this legislation, like the Bank of Mauritius, the MRA, the FCC, the FIU and the FSC, are being given wide unchecked powers, under their respective acts, to enable investigatory fishing expedition, with an erosion of judicial control on them.

On the definition of “beneficial ownership”, and here, I refer to clause 4, where this Bill is amending the Companies Act redefining “beneficial owner” to include any natural person who ultimately owns or controls a company or on whose behalf a transaction is conducted. It explicitly includes control through voting rights, debt instruments or positions held within a legal person.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, clause 5 amends the Co-operatives Act to mandate a register of beneficial owners for societies, and clauses 12 and 20 amend the Financial Services Act and Trusts Act, respectively, to require detailed registers of trusts, including settlors, protectors and beneficiaries. The advantage here is clear, Madam Speaker. It closes the loopholes that previously allowed opaque structures to hide illicit wealth. It directly addresses one of the key deficiencies cited during our grey listing.

However, the disadvantage lies in the administrative burden. Madam Speaker, the definition is broad, capturing effective control which can be subjective for legitimate family offices or complex investments structures, determining the natural person at the end of the chain, can be legally complex. If the guidance is not clear, we run the risk of over-reporting or inaccurate reporting, which defeats the purpose of transparency.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, while clause 12 states that this information shall not be made accessible to the public, the sheer volume of data required to be maintained by trustees and service providers increases compliance costs significantly.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, on asset recovery and confiscation powers. Clause 9 amends the Financial Crimes Commission Act of 2023, introducing the concept of “property of corresponding value”. This allows for confiscation, even if the original proceeds of crime cannot be located or have been dissipated or are held by a third party. It also empowers the Commission to require financial institutions to provide customer information within 48 hours under Section 68A.

The advantage is a robust deterrent. Madam Speaker, criminals often hide assets behind nominees or convert them into different forms. This clause ensures that crime does not pay, even if the specific cash is gone, Madam Speaker. However, the disadvantage is the potential impact on third party rights. The definition of “property of corresponding value” is wide enough to include lawfully acquired property. While there are safeguards, the burden of proof

shifts significantly, and we must ensure that innocent third parties, who acquire assets in good faith, Madam Speaker, are not inadvertently penalised.

Madam Speaker, I refer to clause 9, where reference is made to an amendment to be brought to section 56 of the FCC Act. The question is: why was the Independent Police Complaints Commission created if now we shall have the Commission investigating on the police and vice versa?

Madam Speaker, I note that in Section 64 (1) wide powers are being given to the Financial Crimes Commission. I hope that this clause will be used by the FCC judiciously, Madam Speaker.

On a positive note, Madam Speaker, I note that clause 9, Section 104 introduces for the first time a Compensation Order, allowing courts to compensate persons who suffer loss due to serious default or gross negligence by commission officers. This, Madam Speaker, is a crucial safeguard that was lacking in previous legislation, and must be highlighted as a significant improvement in balancing enforcement powers with individual rights.

Let me, now, refer to clause 68A which concerns power to require information for asset recovery investigations. We understand that now, through this Bill, by a simple notice which can be sent by electronic means, that is, an e-mail, the FCC can obtain customer information from financial institutions as compared to a judge's order. Madam Speaker, this is very dangerous!

Thirdly, on operational efficiency and FIU powers, clause 10 amends the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act. It introduces section 10A, allowing the FIU to order a temporary suspension of a suspicious transaction for up to 72 hours and can be extended by a judge.

It also establishes, Madam Speaker – and the hon. Minister earlier mentioned that – a Centralised Information Management System, which is under Section 19EA of the Bill. Now, with regard to the administration and management of the system, it is stated that “The Ministry shall”. May we be informed which Ministry are we referring to? I believe it is the Ministry responsible for the subject of money laundering. Is it the Ministry of Finance?

Madam Speaker, in the past, by the time the FIU analysed a report and law enforcement acted, funds had often moved offshore. A 72-hour freeze allows time for investigation. Definitely, the CIMS will improve data sharing between competent authorities, addressing the silos issue often cited by evaluators. However, the disadvantage is the risk to legitimate commerce. A 72-hour suspension, if used frequently and without precise intelligence, can disrupt legitimate business transactions, damage commercial relationships and expose reporting institutions to liability from their clients.

The clause mandates non-disclosure of the suspension order, which is necessary for investigation but adds to the compliance, complexity for banks who must manage client expectations without revealing regulatory actions.

Fourthly, Madam Speaker, on judicial efficiency clause 6 amends the Courts Act inserting section 41AA and section 80E, mandating that criminal proceedings before the Financial Crimes Division be conducted expeditiously *de die in diem*, once a plea is entered with strict requirements for granting adjournments. The advantage is undeniable and we do welcome this amendment. One of the criticisms during the grey listing period was the length of time taken to prosecute financial crimes. Delays often led to evidence degradation or witness attrition and as we say: justice delayed is justice denied, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

This clause forces a timeline on the judiciary...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I cannot make my speech if somebody is barking behind me.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Come on! Come on!

Mr Lesjongard: This has happened too often, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: I know!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden : Il doit retirer ! Il doit retirer ces mots-là !

Madam Speaker: Mr Jhummun, please!

An hon. Member: Withdraw!

Madam Speaker: Both of you...

(Interruptions)

Members...

(Interruptions)

Both of you...

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhummun, please...

Mr Jhummun: I did not say anything.

Madam Speaker: You didn't say anything?

Mr Jhummun: I did not say!

Madam Speaker: I am asking you to say that...

Mr Jhummun: Ce n'est pas moi !

Madam Speaker: Ce n'est pas vous ?

Mr Assirvaden: C'est un chien !

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: S'il se prend pour un chien qu'est-ce que je peux faire ?

Madam Speaker: Non, alors là ça ne va pas ! No, hon. Minister ...

Mr Assirvaden: Cheap barking...

Madam Speaker: Tout marchait très bien là et l'honorable Jhummun fait comme si je suis sourde ! Bien sûr, je l'ai entendu !

Mr Jhummun: Ce n'est pas moi, Madame !

Ms Anquetil : Mais il n'aboie pas, Madame.

Madam Speaker: Vous, vous n'avez pas dit les mots qu'il ne fallait pas mais vous l'avait interrompu !

An hon. Member : Il a dit qu'il faut le mettre en prison le plus vite possible !

Madam Speaker: Qu'est-ce-que je vais faire ?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Retire le mot '*barking*'!

Mr Lesjongard: No, I am willing but he should withdraw! But he should stop the way he is behaving...

Madam Speaker: I have told you in the past!

Mr Lesjongard: No, I don't think so!

Madam Speaker: Yes, I have told you in the past, Mr Jhummun!

Mr Jhummun: But this time it was not me, Madam!

Madam Speaker: It was not you!

(Interruptions)

Everybody knows it was you!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, just carry on! I won't ask him anything because everybody is not being honest! Please!

Mr Lesjongard: Then I won't withdraw what I said!

Madam Speaker: No, just *terminez votre discours!*

An hon. Member: Terminez! Terminez!

Madam Speaker: And he was actually on a good... *autant que j'ai pu comprendre. Il félicitait...*

Mr Assirvaden: The word 'barking', he can use barking in the ...

Madam Speaker: No, you cannot!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, but nobody uttered that!

Madam Speaker, it is said in a sense that nobody...

Madam Speaker: Okay, je perds patience. J'en ai marre ! Je lève la séance !

Vous n'avez pas compris ce qui se passe-là ? Soit, vous me laissez tranquille, nous savons très bien qu'il y a eu deux fautes. On reste tranquille ! On continue ou je lève la séance ? À vous de voir !

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Be a gentleman!

Madam Speaker: Ça suffit!

Mr Lesjongard: No, if he agrees he has said what he said earlier, interrupting me, then I am willing to withdraw otherwise I won't withdraw. If nobody said...

Madam Speaker : Non, mais...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard : Ce n'est pas lui ?

Madam Speaker: Alors, si ce n'est pas lui, celui qui a dit ça doit me dire qui c'est. On va voir qui s'est ?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Pran kredi la tomem ! Ale Babajee, pran kredi la tomem !*

Madam Speaker: Mais c'est ce que je dis. Franchement, soit M. Jhummun pense que je suis totalement à l'ouest et il me fait croire, tout le monde sait que c'est lui !

Mr Etwareea: Madame la présidente, pour trouver un compromis, je prends la responsabilité de ce qui s'est passé.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Okay!

Mr Lesjongard: I withdraw what I said, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: De toute manière...

Mr Lesjongard: Let me come back to my speech, Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Please, withdraw that word!

Mr Lesjongard: I said I withdraw, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker: Oh, you withdraw, I didn't hear! Because everybody is shouting! *De toute manière, cet après-midi je vais aller regarder, nous avons enregistré, je vais aller regarder cet après-midi. Mais vous avez retiré le mot, c'est très bien. Franchement, il est déjà 17h50.*

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I was talking...

Madam Speaker: Yes, take it in ...

Mr Lesjongard:... about *de die in diem* concept and I was saying that this clause forces a timeline on the judiciary and the parties concerned. However, the disadvantage is the potential pressure on the justice system. Complex financial crimes involved voluminous documents and expert witnesses. We also know that considerable logistic is required if we have a certain number of cases being dealt with concurrently. Therefore, Madam Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister is – whether the judiciary was consulted in the drafting of this section.

Madam Speaker, forcing *de die in diem* trial without adequate preparation time could compromise the quality of justice or lead to appeals based on unfair trial conditions. We must ensure the Judiciary is resourced adequately to handle this accelerated pace, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I hope everybody, I think it's the Latin that got everybody like very odd, the *de die in diem* thing. We are used to this. Aren't we Attorney-General?

Mr Lesjongard: Fair play, Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: Allez-y!

Mr Lesjongard: On novel offences, clause 8 amends the Environment Act 2024, introducing for the first time the offence of ecocide with penalties up to ten years of penal servitude.

Madam Speaker, may the House be informed as to why this clause has been introduced in this Bill. I sincerely think that this amendment has nothing to do with AML/CFT and I think maybe...

Mr Etwareea: *Bizin lir impe!*

Mr Lesjongard: ... this has been put in this Bill to please the Party in Government.

Madam Speaker, the disadvantage is the enforceability of ecocide which is a very complex concept involving scientific evidence of severe, widespread or long-term damage. Prosecuting this requires specialised experts that our current law enforcement may lack, Madam Speaker.

Clause 7 amends the Declaration of Assets Act expanding the definition of work of art to include digital arts and collectables and increase in penalties for non-declaration. The advantage is that it expands the scope of predicate offences for money laundering.

Toutefois, on est en droit de poser la question, Madame la présidente, est-ce qu'on a à Maurice les évaluateurs d'objets d'art, de tableaux etc.

Madam Speaker, valuing digital arts for asset declaration is highly subjective and may lead to disputes between declarants and the Commission.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I must address the safeguards regarding administrative penalties. Clause 2 amends the Bank of Mauritius Act requiring the Bank to notify financial institutions of its intention to impose penalties and granting them 21 days to make written representation before the penalties imposed. This is a vital addition. In the previous regime, there were concerns about the immediacy of sanctions without adequate recourse. This clause introduces a layer of due process that protects institutions from arbitrary regulatory action. It is a disadvantage only in the sense that it may slightly delay the imposition of sanctions but it is a necessary trade-off for fairness and legal certainty.

Madam Speaker, I must now address the elephant in the room. The prospect of Mauritius being grey listed, again, following ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation schedule in 2027 is in front of us. *Et je ne suis pas en train de crier au loup comme certains.*

Mr Etwareea : Prophète de malheur.

Mr Lesjongard: The Comsure Group notes that Mauritius is currently undergoing ongoing enhanced follow-up and the 2027 assessment will evaluate both technical compliance and effectiveness across 11 immediate outcomes with a more prominent focus on counterproliferation financing. The Platform Africa Report highlights that this evaluation will be conducted under FATF'S revised 2022 methodology which is more rigorous and outcome-focused.

What are the present possibilities of a relisting Madam Speaker? The risk is not negligible. The FATF and ESAAMLG will be looking for evidence that our laws are not just

on paper but are effectively implemented and enforced. They will assess whether our financial institutions are truly applying risk-based supervision, whether our authorities are successfully investigating and persecuting complex money laundering cases and whether our beneficial ownership information is accurate, timely and accessible.

The inclusion of CPF as a core component of this Bill, is a proactive step in this regard. However, legislation alone is insufficient. The effectiveness of this Bill, Madam Speaker, will depend entirely on its implementation – the training of officers, the allocation of resources, the coordination between agencies and the culture of compliance within the private sector.

If today we pass this Bill, but fail to adequately resource the FIU, the Financial Crimes Commission, the police and the supervisory authorities, we risk creating a façade of compliance that will not withstand the scrutiny of and on site ESAAMLG evaluation in 2027. Conversely, if we pass this Bill and couple it with a sustained well-funded and coordinated implementations strategy, we cannot only avoid relisting but position Mauritius as a regional leader in financial integrity. Madam Speaker, time will tell whether we have succeeded.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, this Bill represents a necessary and timely evolution of our legal framework. However, we must legislate with our eyes wide open. The disadvantages, the increased compliance burden, the risk of regulatory overreach, the potential impact on business cost and privacy are real and must be mitigated through careful drafting, clear guidelines and ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders. Most importantly, Madam Speaker, we must recognise that this Bill is not a silver bullet. Its success will be determined not in this House but in the offices of regulators, the courtrooms of our judiciary and the compliance department of our financial institutions.

When we vote for this piece of legislation today, Madam Speaker, let us do so with the solemn pledge to implement it with wisdom, proportionality and an unwavering commitment to both security and justice. For, in safeguarding our financial system Madam Speaker, we are safeguarding the prosperity and dignity of every citizen in this country.

I am done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, very much.

Yes, hon. Minister of Labour.

(5.59 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr R. Uteem): Madame la présidente, j'allais commencer mon discours en regrettant l'absence de l'ancien Deputy Prime Minister, qui avait parlé longuement sur les risques d'un downgrade de *Grey listing* de Maurice sur la liste de GAFI mais en écoutant l'honorable leader de l'Opposition, je vois qu'il y a eu beaucoup de concertation parce qu'en l'entendant, je croyais croire que c'était l'ancien Deputy Prime Minister qui était en train de parler. Et ce n'est pas une coïncidence parce que ce matin aussi, lors du PNQ, c'était ex DPM, ex DPM, ex DPM comme-ci l'alliance a déjà été conclue entre l'ex DPM et le MSM.

(Interruptions)

Le leader de l'Opposition a commencé son discours en faisant référence au Financial Crimes Commission et la lutte contre la corruption. Excusez-moi, Monsieur le leader de l'Opposition, vous êtes très mal placé pour venir parler de lutte contre la corruption. Mais ce qui est de votre commentaire sur le Directeur Général, je vais reprendre ce que l'honorable Premier ministre avait dit en réponse à vote PNQ.

Le Directeur Général présent, intérimaire du Financial Crimes Commission a été nommé selon les procédures établies par la loi, dans un premier temps, pour neuf mois et dans un deuxième temps, pour une deuxième période de neuf mois. Pourquoi ? Parce que le gouvernement est en train de préparer une nouvelle loi – le Financial Crimes Agency qui va absorber le Financial Crimes Commission. Donc, ce n'est pas la peine maintenant de nommer quelqu'un à la tête de la Financial Crimes Commission si dans quelques semaines, quelques mois, on aura à nommer quelqu'un d'autre à la tête du Financial Crimes Agency.

Mais ceci dit, le gouvernement a déjà pris les mesures nécessaires pour amender la loi, le Financial Crimes Commission, pour renforcer les pouvoirs du *Director of Public Prosecution* pour qu'il n'y ait plus des cover-up, pour qu'on ne puisse plus ranger les cas de corruption dans les tiroirs. On a aussi amendé la loi pour permettre à la police et cela, en réponse à une des critiques de GAFI. On a permis à la police de faire des enquêtes parallèles dans des cas de fraudes, dans des cas de blanchiment d'argent.

Madame la présidente, le leader de l'Opposition et c'est bon qu'il nous ait parlé de l'île Maurice s'étant retrouvé sur la liste grise en 2020, mais il choisit de ne pas dire pourquoi. Moi je vous dis pourquoi. Monsieur le leader de l'Opposition, c'est parce que vous étiez dans ce gouvernement.

Madam Speaker : Adressez-vous ...

Mr Uteem : Vous vous souvenez, Madame la présidente, de cas de Alvaro Sobrinho ? Jean-Claude Bastos de Morais, Quantum Global, Dos Santos, le Angola Sovereign Fund.

An hon. Member: Mémoire courte.

Mr Uteem : Démantèlement de la BAI, ingérence du gouvernement dans les enquêtes. C'est la raison pour laquelle qu'on s'est retrouvé sur la liste grise en 2020. Heureusement qu'il y a eu Covid et on n'a pas eu à avoir tout l'entendu de l'impact d'être sur la liste grise. Aujourd'hui le leader de l'Opposition nous dit qu'il n'y a plus de comités présidés par le Premier ministre comme c'était le cas sous le régime précédent. Mais je suis sûr qu'il doit lire le compte rendu des décisions du cabinet.

Le 7 novembre 2025, le cabinet a pris note de la composition d'un comité interministériel sur l'*anti-money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism and combatting proliferation of financing*, qui est coprésidé par la ministre du Service financier et l'honorable *Attorney General* et dont fait partie pas moins de six ministres de ce gouvernement et 16 représentants des *competent authorities*. Je parle, par exemple, de la Banque de Maurice, de la *Financial Services Commission*, du *Registrar of Companies*, *the Registrar of Association* and *the Registrar of Corporatives*. Seize ! Dont la *Financial Intelligence Unit*.

Et c'est ce comité, Madame la présidente, qui, aujourd'hui, a accouché du projet de loi que vous avez. C'est un travail d'équipe, bien sûr, présidé par les deux coprésidents, Madame la ministre du Secteur financier et l'honorable *Attorney General*. Mais tous les ministres et les *competent authorities* ont eu l'occasion de faire des commentaires sur ce projet de loi. Donc, c'est un projet de loi qui fait l'unanimité parmi les *law enforcement agencies*.

Et oui, on espère qu'avec ce projet de loi, on va pouvoir répondre aux attentes du GAFI, l'année prochaine, en 2027, à travers l'ESAAMLG, qui va à nouveau nous passer en examen. Mais qu'est-ce qui s'est passé, Madame la présidente, depuis 2020 à aujourd'hui ? L'honorable leader de l'opposition a raison de souligner le risque qu'on se retrouve sur la liste grise. Pourquoi ? À qui la faute ?

Peut-être que l'honorable leader de l'opposition oublie le fameux homme d'affaires : Mamy Ravatomanga, pendant dix ans sous le gouvernement MSM !

Mr Assirvaden: 7.3 milliards !

Mr Uteem: 7.3 milliards ! Ce monsieur a pu circuler librement à travers des sociétés écrans à Maurice. Donc, qui était responsable de cela ?

L'autre cas : *Banyan Tree Bank*, la *Silver Bank*. Hier même, Madame la présidente, on a reçu un communiqué de la Banque centrale, qui a remplacé le conservateur par un *receiver*.

Mais *Banyan Tree*, en 2020, avait premièrement forcé la Banque de Maurice de nommer un conservateur. Il avait gelé tous les comptes. Tous les comptes étaient gelés. Et qu'est-ce qui s'est passé après ? La Banque centrale, sous l'ancien régime, dont le gouverneur général est sous un mandat d'arrêt aujourd'hui, et l'ancien ministre des Finances est aussi sous un mandat d'arrêt, qu'ont-ils fait ? Ils ont agréé à un transfert d'actions entre les actionnaires de *Banyan Tree* aux nouveaux actionnaires de la *Silver Bank*. Et puis, ils ont fait pression sur des agences gouvernementales pour qu'elles gardent leurs dépôts avec la *Silver Bank*. Ils ont fait pression sur la municipalité de Port Louis et sur la municipalité de Curepipe pour qu'elles renouvellent leurs dépôts avec la *Silver Bank*.

Je sais de quoi je parle parce que j'étais le président du *Public Accounts Committee* et on avait fait remarquer dans notre rapport; ils l'ont dit : « Ils ont reçu la pression, des instructions, venant du ministère des Finances, de renouveler leurs dépôts avec la *Silver Bank*. » Alors que ce même ministère des Finances avait dit dans une circulaire que n'importe quel corps paraétatique et municipalité qui a un excédent d'argent devait investir dans des bons du Trésor.

Au final, dans une réponse à une *PQ*, l'honorable Premier ministre, c'était en date du 2 décembre 2025, a annoncé à la Chambre qu'un montant de R 3.35 milliards, appartenant à des *government related entities*, a été placé dans la *Silver Bank* sous leur gouvernement.

Mr Ameer Meea: Padayachy!

Mr Uteem: Après, aujourd'hui, il vient dire que Maurice risque d'être sur la liste grise ! On risque d'être sur la liste grise ? À cause de vous et de votre gouvernement précédent !

Hon. Members: Shame !

Mr Assirvaden: *Ar sa pou al fer lalians la ein!*

Mr Uteem: Madame la présidente, j'ai un petit peu souri lorsque le leader de l'opposition nous a demandé pourquoi on est en train d'introduire une nouvelle disposition

d'écocide. Il va même plus loin pour dire que si on le fait, c'est sous la pression d'un de nos partenaires au gouvernement.

Si le leader de l'opposition avait pris la peine de consulter le GAFI/FATF, les experts, il aurait su que depuis 2012 – je ne parle pas depuis 2025, quand on a pris le pouvoir –, depuis 13 ans, le GAFI n'arrête pas de tirer la sonnette d'alarme concernant les crimes contre l'environnement, qui sont devenus un racket international. Je parle de *deforestation*. Je parle de trafic d'ivoire et du trafic des animaux protégés.

Ms Anquetil: Bois de rose !

Mr Uteem: Je parle justement du trafic de bois de rose.

Ms Anquetil: Bois de rose ! J'avais posé la question !

Mr Uteem: Du trafic des bois de santal qui, aujourd'hui, selon le GAFI, je cite FATF de son *website* –

“Environmental crime is one of the most profitable criminal enterprises, generating around USD 110 to 281 billion in criminal gains each year. It covers a wide range of unlawful activities such as illegal logging, illegal wildlife trade and waste trafficking.”

Mais à Maurice, ce n'est pas un crime ! C'est ça le problème. Sous le précédent régime, ils n'ont jamais légiféré pour qu'il y ait un crime contre l'environnement. Et puis, ils se disent être des grands défenseurs, des grands écolos, un parti vert ! Depuis 2012, le GAFI vous dit qu'il faut légiférer pour avoir un *environmental crime*. C'est ce que nous sommes en train de faire aujourd'hui ! *Ecocide* !

Aujourd'hui, quand on passe une loi pour venir dire que toute infraction sera punie d'un *penal servitude* de dix ans, automatiquement, cela devient un crime. Pourquoi est-ce important que ce soit un crime ? Parce que sous la *Financial Intelligence Crime*, quand on est en train de combattre le blanchiment d'argent, la définition, c'est '*proceeds of a crime*.'

Donc, auparavant, toutes les infractions sous l'*Environment Act* n'étaient pas des *crimes*. Maintenant, avec cette loi, on aura un crime. Maintenant avec cette loi, on aura blanchiment d'argent pour tout ce qui est en train de tuer mère nature. Voilà, M. le leader de l'opposition, si vous aviez fait votre *homework*, vous auriez su pourquoi on a mis cette disposition dans notre loi.

Madame la présidente, le leader de l'opposition a aussi fait une remarque par rapport à toutes ces nouvelles provisions qu'on a dans cette loi : « que le business sera encore plus

difficile. » Il le dit : « Il faudra collecter toutes les informations, les partager. Ça prend du temps. Ça prend de l'argent. »

Mais, Madame la présidente, la réputation de Maurice n'a pas de prix !

An hon. Member: Exactement !

Mr Uteem: Eux, ils ont grandi, ils ont régné dans l'opacité. Nous, on change. On règne dans la transparence. C'est ça la différence !

Ms Anquetil: Tu as compris, Joe ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard : ...*zot tou seki*...

Mr Uteem: Si c'est un coût d'opération, si effectivement il y a un *compliance cost*, mais...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker : *Chut !*

Mr Uteem: Mais les bénéficiaires qui décolleront dans notre secteur financier comme un centre financier crédible international reconnu va excéder tout le risque d'augmentation du coût.

Autre chose, et là j'étais vraiment très surpris, c'est le commentaire de l'honorable leader de l'Opposition concernant la justice. Vous savez, Madame la présidente, on veut être une juridiction crédible. Donc, on vient avec une loi pour que tous les cas de *Financial Crime* soient disposés le plus rapidement possible tout en respectant le droit des accusés.

Donc, on est en train d'introduire le concept du procès continué – tous les jours.

Madam Speaker: *De die in diem.*

Mr Uteem : C'est cela le fameux *de die in diem*. Mais ce n'est pas un nouveau, on l'a déjà en ce qui concerne les assises. Donc, simplement, maintenant on va appliquer le même raisonnement pour les *financial crimes*. D'autant plus que très souvent dans les *financial crimes*, on a des témoins qui sortent de l'étranger pour venir à Maurice parce que les crimes de blanchiment d'argent international, il y a la coopération de différents pays. Et on a su, quand il y avait, par exemple, le cas Boskalis, comment c'était difficile parce qu'à chaque fois M. Maunthrooa renvoyait le procès.

Donc là, on introduit des mesures pour justement terminer au plus vite possible. Mais la remarque du l'honorable leader de l'Opposition qui me dérange, c'est qu'il est en train de suggérer qu'on puisse, nous, donner des directives au Chef Juge, au Juge. On ne peut pas le faire.

Mr Lesjongard: Je n'ai jamais dit ça, Madame la présidente.

Mr Uteem : Non, suggérer qu'on est entre de mettre pression sur le Judiciaire. On ne ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Non, ce qu'il a dit, c'est est ce que le Judiciaire a été consulté. Nous savons qu'il y a la séparation des pouvoirs. Allez-y !

Mr Uteem : Le Judiciaire, je peux vous donner la garantie, et au l'honorable leader de l'Opposition, le Judiciaire va demeurer indépendant et il n'y aura aucune ingérence de notre gouvernement et jamais, au grand jamais, vous allez entendre l'honorable Premier ministre ou n'importe quel ministre de ce gouvernement venir critiquer la décision d'une magistrate comme l'ancien Premier ministre l'a fait.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem : Mais c'est vrai ! L'honorable leader de l'Opposition a la mémoire courte. Madame la présidente, brièvement je vais parler du deux aspects de ce texte de loi qui, un, suscite quelques controverses et c'est les provisions concernant le *Trust* – l'honorable leader de l'Opposition a fait référence au *Trust*.

Madame la présidente, j'ai eu la chance de faire partie du *steering committee* en 2000, qui était venu avec le *Financial Services Commission* et j'étais dans l'équipe qui a rédigé le *Trusts Act*. Je me souviens très bien que 25 ans de cela, il avait une forte pression pour garder de la confidentialité autour...

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem : Il doit *report to the ex-Deputy Prime Minister*.

An hon. Member: *Asiz zot!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Pas de Jacques Brel là ! Pas de Jacques Brel !

Mr Uteem : Donc, quand on était dans ce comité, c'était très important de préserver la confidentialité des informations concernant les *Trusts* et c'est pourquoi vous allez voir, je crois, de mémoire, que c'est à la Section 23 du *Trusts Act* qu'il faut passer par un ordre de la Cour Suprême pour avoir des informations concernant l'identité du *settlor*, des bénéficiaires et l'administration du *Trust*.

Mais, cela c'était 25 ans de cela – depuis, les choses ont évolué. Même l'Angleterre, où dans un cas – je suis sûr que quand vous étiez à l'université, vous avez entendu des *secrets trusts*, *half secrets trusts*. Donc, cela n'existait même pas les *Trusts*. Il n'y avait aucune obligation de venir déclarer des *trusts*, encore moins de les enregistrer mais aujourd'hui même en Angleterre, il y a une obligation d'enregistrer la plupart des *express trusts avec Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Service*.

Donc, les choses évoluent et nous, à l'île Maurice aussi, on a du modifier nos lois pour créer ce registre de *Trusts* qui sera avec le FSC mais on a essayé de préserver la balance entre la nécessité de bien réglementer le secteur mais aussi préserver la confidentialité et donc ce n'est pas tout le monde qui aura accès à ces données. Ce n'est que la *Financial Services Commission* et les autres *regulated entities*, par exemple, les banques qui ont besoin d'avoir des informations sur les *Trusts*. Donc, on est en train de ménager les deux.

Et puis, finalement, Madame la présidente, un mot sur le secteur qui concerne mon ministère, le *Registrar of Association*. Le *Registrar of Association* qui est concerné par la recommandation 8 on *Preventing terrorism financing in non-profit organisations*.

Donc, le GAFI a souligné que les institutions charitables et les sociétés, les associations qui tombent sous mon ministère ont un risque d'être utilisés abusivement.

Madam Speaker: Manipulés.

Mr Uteem : Manipulés, pour le financement des activités terroristes. Notamment, il y a tout un scandale avec le financement d'Al Qaïda dans le passé. C'est pourquoi, aujourd'hui, on fait des amendements, on apporte des amendements au *Registration of Associations Act* pour assurer que toutes les associations qui sont à risque fassent un *risk based assessment* et prennent les mesures nécessaires. En même temps, les officiers de mon ministère vont faire des inspections et s'assurer que les associations à Maurice, surtout les associations caritatives, religieuses ne sont pas manipulées et utilisées.

En même temps, on a profité pour enlever une provision qui était assez archaïque qui permettait au ministre de décider si une association qui n'était pas en conformité avec la loi

pouvait continuer à exister. Ce n'était pas le cas, par exemple, pour les compagnies. Pour les compagnies, si vous n'êtes pas *compliant*, *the Registrar of Companies* vous *deregister*. Mais par contre pour les associations, *le Registrar of Associations* n'avait pas ce pouvoir, c'était le ministre de tutelle. La conséquence, il y a plusieurs milliers d'associations qui ne sont pas *compliant* à Maurice et qui existent toujours.

Donc, avec cet amendement, on retire ce pouvoir subjectif de la main des politiciens et on les met dans la main du régulateur, *le Registrar of Associations*. Donc, je vais conclure, Madame la présidente, en félicitant ma collègue pour cette excellente loi et j'espère que, maintenant, avec cette loi on va passer facilement le *technical assessment*. Maintenant, on va s'assurer au niveau des *Law Enforcement Agencies* qu'on passe aussi l'examen d'*effectiveness*. Merci.

Madam Speaker: L'honorable Rookny, c'est à vous!

(6.22 p.m.)

Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Madam Speaker, let me put the introduction of this Bill in the current context. We are a small island of 1.2 million without much natural resources and our main assets being our human capital.

Our financial sector contributes around 12% our GDP and employs tens of thousands of people directly and indirectly which we need to protect as much as we can. Prior to 2014, we were really a jurisdiction of choice for many financial activities but since then, by a sheer incompetence of the Jugnauth government, we lost a battle and allowed our DTA with India, with South Africa to be renegotiated against our interests and other DTAs were just terminated.

I cannot quantify enough the negative impact this has had on our sector. This has contributed in chasing away major international banks like the Deutsche Bank from our financial landscape whilst others have aborted their venture here.

To make matters worse, *comme mes amis avant moi l'ont archi dit*, in 2020, the FATF placed us on its grey list. The trust that we had built over the years of constant hard work took a serious blow. It is very pertinent to ask whether we are still considered as a credible financial hub. We all remember 2020 when Mauritius was placed on the FATF Grey List. Correspondent banking relationships came under strain, transaction costs grew, the reputational cost was immediate and measurable. Investors asked hard questions, some walked away.

Ce n'est pas une question abstraite, Madame la présidente. Quand la réputation financière d'un pays est entachée, c'est le citoyen ordinaire qui en paye le prix, pas seulement les grandes institutions. We came off that list but a country that has been grey listed once, carries a scar. This Bill is in part digressing on that scar. For that reason alone, it deserves to pass. Be it as it may, we are rebuilding and we need to reengineer. However, let us be honest, we are dutybound to introduce this legislation. This is an FATF compliance legislation. I am not saying we should not have brought this legislation but leadership goes beyond mere compliance. This is a serious Bill. It deserves a serious engagement and that is what I intend to offer today in support of its broad objectives.

We have to admit that we had laws, albeit fragmented but it is on implementation that we have had issues in the past. Now, this Bill takes us from isolated measures to five interconnected pillars –

- data strategy;
- asset recovery;
- transparency;
- expanded regulatory scope, and
- judicial speed.

Madam Speaker, let us begin with what is perhaps the most consequential, conceptual expansion in this Bill. For decades, our regulatory framework spoke of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT). This Bill now adds the letter 'P', Countering Proliferation Financing. This is not an acronym change for the sake of paper work. As we speak, the Middle East burns. Wars are being fought with weapons financed through structures that look on paper to be perfectly legitimate. The same instruments used to hide a corrupt official's kickback can and have been used to fund the acquisition of technologies capable of mass destruction.

Now that proliferation is in the game, those who are responsible in the relevant institutions will have not only to look at where does the money come from, where the proceeds come from, whether they come from legitimate or illegitimate proceeds. They should also be thinking about whether the proceeds of a legitimate business are going to be used for the wrong intent. Maybe they are buying aluminium tubes but instead of going for the manufacturing of a farm, it will be going for the manufacturing of a nuclear enrichment plant. Mauritius as an international financial centre cannot be naïve about this. We cannot say

it happens elsewhere. Everywhere financial flows move is potentially a transit point. The addition of proliferation financing to our compliance obligations is a necessary, mature and courageous step.

Madam Speaker, I want to bring this discussion down to earth because financial crime does not always announce itself in the language of weapons programmes and offshore foundations. Sometimes it arrives in a lorry, *parfois tractopelle aussi*, sometimes it enters through a port and sometimes it enters with the blessing of the State itself. I refer to the matter of the importation of *ti papier*, the rolling paper commonly used to smoke cannabis. That was authorised under the previous administration. This was not a grey area import. This was the product of essentially no legitimate commercial application in the volumes imported, which was staggering and which raised no alarm. No alarm bells and without my dear colleagues, then in the Opposition, this would have remained unknown to the public.

Madam Speaker, the volumes imported would have represented at commercial wholesale prices, approximately Rs460 million. The question was never satisfactorily answered. It is not just where the product went. The question is where did the money come from. Who funded this? How was it declared? What due diligence was performed by the institutions that process those payments? That, Madam Speaker, is precisely the kind of transaction that the amendments to the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act now seeks to capture. The new provisions require reporting persons, banks, financial institutions, licensed dealers to conduct rigorous customer due diligence to identify beneficial ownership, to flag transactions that make no obvious commercial sense. A transaction of that scale for a product of that nature should have been a red flag on the first day it crossed a Compliance Officer's desk. *Ce genre d'affaires, Madame la présidente, n'est pas le résultat d'une erreur isolée. C'est le résultat d'un système qui n'a pas posé les bonnes questions.* This Bill, if properly implemented, ensures those questions get asked.

Madam Speaker, I want to speak plainly about something that every Mauritian sees and that our legal system has historically been unable to address –

- The person who drives a luxury vehicle that costs several million rupees on a salary that would barely cover its monthly insurance premium.
- The individual who resides in a property that, by any rational calculation, would require decades of their declared income to acquire.

- The family whose lifestyle bears no relationship to their formal professional track record.

This again, is not an abstract phenomenon. We have seen it so many times recently. It exists, it is visible and for too long, our institutions have lacked both the tools and at times, the will to pursue it. The amendments to the Financial Crimes Commission Act introduced in this Bill are directly targeted at this reality. The concept of property of corresponding in value means that when a convicted person has hidden or dissipated the proceeds of their crime, the State is no longer powerless. It can reach their clean assets, their inherited property, their registered vehicles, their legitimate investments to satisfy the debt they owe to the society. *Je suis tenté de dire pour ceux qui ont mal utilisé les proceeds de la MIC, ils doivent trembler.*

Madam Speaker, one of the architecturally significant reforms in this Bill is the strengthening of beneficial ownerships requirements. The amended Companies Act, the Co-operatives Act, the Trust Act, the Foundations Act, all now carry more rigorous obligations to identify, record and report the actual human being who ultimately owns or controls the legal entity. We really are looking at the mind who is behind the thinking process and who is instructing the commission of the crime. This matters because the classical structure of financial crime is not a man walking into a bank with a bag of cash. It is a chain of legal purses, each one owned by other, each one incorporated in a different jurisdiction, each one obscuring the last until the actual beneficial owner is buried beneath layers of legitimate-looking paper work that no single institution can see them.

This Bill addresses that. It defines beneficial ownership broadly and intelligently, capturing control through debt instruments; through differential voting rights; and through the power to appoint senior management. These are precisely the mechanisms sophisticated criminals use when they want to own something without appearing to own it.

I have the feeling that what this legislation wants to do is to be able to lay the hands of the law on everybody who can take a decision or who can cause a decision to be taken to commit a crime. I hope this will even go beyond debt instruments. It will probably even go towards a big client who can account for 70% of your revenue and thereby can dictate how you should take your decisions.

Madam Speaker, I must raise a concern that colleagues examining comparable legislations internationally will recognise immediately. In the European Union, under

AMLD5 and AMLD6, beneficial ownership registers are partially public and crossed-linked across jurisdictions. In the United States, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network maintains a mandatory beneficial ownership registry with a real enforcement. In Singapore, the Monetary Authority maintains an integrated supervisory intelligence framework.

What we have in this Bill is still fundamentally a system of self-declaration. So, when the financial institution is implementing a structure, it will potentially ask its potential client: ‘Who is your beneficial owner?’ It will ask, in the process, to be provided with a share register to ascertain who are the shareholders. As regards the beneficial ownership, it can only rely on the declaration of the client. So, we have a system which still relies on self-declaration. We ask entities to declare their beneficial owners. We do not, as yet, build in robust, independent verification mechanisms: cross-database checks against tax records, customs data, and immigration information. We collect the data, but we are not yet weaponizing it. *Nous déclarons les bénéficiaires économiques. Nous ne les vérifions pas encore de manière systématique. Et un criminel sophistiqué le sait très bien.*

Madam Speaker, I want to borrow a distinction that I think is fundamental to understanding the limitations of this Bill. There is a difference between compliance-driven AML system and an intelligence-driven AML system. This Bill moves us towards the former. It does not yet deliver the latter.

A compliance system asks –

- Did the bank fill out the form?
- Did the real estate agent submit the report?
- Did the trust update the register?

These are necessary questions, but they are not sufficient.

An intelligence-driven system asks –

- What does the data tell us?
- Where are the patterns?
- Which sectors?
- Which structures?
- Which nationalities of beneficial owners are showing anomalies?

The United States, through the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2020, moved explicitly towards intelligence-led enforcement, integrating data analytics, enabling information sharing between private institutions and creating a feedback loop between the FIU and reporting entities.

Madam Speaker, some of the most consequential financial crime investigations in the world were broken open, not by regulators, not by prosecutors, but by insiders. People within institutions saw something wrong, had the courage to speak and paid a personal price for doing so. That is why countries like the US go further. They incentivise whistleblowers.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I would like to say, I support this Bill. I support it because our financial system must be clean. I support it because the person living in an inexplicable palace, driving a vehicle their salary could never finance, must finally feel that the law is watching. I support it because the institution that allowed *ti papie* importation of that scale to proceed without scrutiny must now operate in a framework that makes that kind of institutional sleep impossible. I support it because compliance with FATF standards is not a technicality. It is the price of admission to the global financial community, and we have paid the cost of exclusion before. We should never pay it again.

Nous avons les institutions. Nous avons l'intelligence. Nous avons la volonté. Ce qu'il nous faut, maintenant, c'est le courage de ne pas nous arrêter à ce qui est suffisant et de poursuivre ce qui est excellent.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Etwareea!

(6.40 p.m.)

Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or): Merci, Madame la présidente.

La concurrence entre classes financières internationales est actuellement féroce. Que ce soit entre Genève et Port Louis, que ce soit entre Seychelles et Singapour, que ce soit entre New York et Durban, cette concurrence est vraiment féroce. Si nous voulons rester dans cette

course, nous devons continuellement montrer patte blanche. Si nous voulons préserver nos emplois, les 20 000 emplois ; si nous voulons préserver le 12 % de cette industrie dans notre PIB, nous devons continuer à montrer patte blanche.

Donc, je salue l'initiative de l'honorable ministre des Services financiers pour ce projet d'amendement qui va justement dans le sens de maintenir cette tâche financière propre et irréprochable. Cette initiative, évidemment, ne tombe pas du ciel. Elle découle de sa volonté, de la volonté du gouvernement de colmater les brèches qui existent dans la législation telle qu'elle existe aujourd'hui. Les amendements proposés ciblent 24 lois et règlements avec un objectif clair : améliorer l'arsenal juridique et l'efficacité de la lutte contre la criminalité financière.

Cet exercice, disons-le, se fait dans le cadre d'autres exercices qui auront lieu tout bientôt. La première dans le cadre de l'ESAAMLG de la SADC qui aura lieu l'année prochaine. Et le second, par le Groupe d'action financière (GAFI) de la place financière mauricienne. Donc, ces deux évaluations arrivent et autant prévenir, autant agir avant que des évaluations négatives puissent nous arriver.

Je dois dire – comme l'a dit mon ami et collègue, l'honorable Uteem – qu'on aurait bien voulu avoir, aujourd'hui, dans l'hémicycle l'honorable Paul Bérenger. Malheureusement, il est absent dans l'hémicycle. Il nous a beaucoup parlé des risques du *grey listing*. Le *grey listing* veut simplement dire que nous tombons dans une liste de pays qui ne respectent pas les normes établies par le GAFI. Plus concrètement, cela voudrait dire que notre pays pourrait être utilisé pour blanchir de l'argent sale. Mais on n'en est pas là.

Quand l'évaluation du GAFI arrivera, il y aura un rapport et le rapport fera un point sur la situation. Si besoin, ce rapport fera des recommandations pour qu'on puisse rectifier le tir. C'est seulement en cas de refus pour prendre des mesures correctives que le GAFI procéderait au *grey listing*. Je ne dirais pas qu'on est en train de crier au loup mais, disons, qu'on peut donner la chance au gouvernement, à l'honorable ministre, de gérer la chose et puis être prêt pour ces évaluations.

Il y a une très bonne nouvelle, Madame la présidente. Permettez-moi d'évoquer cette bonne nouvelle qu'est le classement Global Financial Centres Index 39, c'est-à-dire 2026, qui vient d'être publié le 26 mars dernier. Maurice occupe désormais le 50^e rang gagnant huit places sur une année dans les classements mondiales des 120 pays. Mais sur un classement

régional, c'est-à-dire Afrique, Moyen-Orient, nous occupons une belle cinquième place derrière Dubaï, Abu Dhabi, Doha et Casablanca.

L'avenir nous dira si nous allons faire mieux que le pays du Golfe qui se trouvent, malheureusement aujourd'hui, dans le tourment à cause de la guerre israélo-américaine contre l'Iran. Je ne dirais pas que les malheurs des uns font le bonheur des autres mais cette guerre a de quoi rabattre les cartes et éventuellement, aider Maurice à se positionner comme une alternative au centre financier du Golfe.

Le *Global Financial Centres Index 39*, qui vient d'être publié, met aussi en évidence quelque chose de très intéressant. Maurice se retrouve à la neuvième place sur une liste des 15 pays qui vont gagner en importance ces prochaines années. Il faut le dire, il y a 10 ans dans ces classements, Maurice occupé le 73^e rang sur une liste de 86 pays.

Donc, Madame la présidente, ne faisons pas la fine bouche et saluons ce bond en avant. Mais voilà comme je-vous ai déjà dit dans le passé, je me méfie de ces agences occidentales qui nous distribuent des notes par ici et des notes par là. Je ne jette pas le bébé avec l'eau du bain, mais je peux affirmer que ces agences imposent leurs propres critères à des pays comme le nôtre qui n'ont pas d'autres choix que de s'y conformer. N'oublions pas que le *Global Financial Centres Index*, dont je viens de parler, est une affaire lucrative de l'entreprise privée qui s'appelle Z/Yen. Je me demande en effet quel est le prix, si on paye, qu'on paye chaque année pour être listé dans cet indice.

Je parlais auparavant du GAFI. Il s'agit d'une initiative du G7, initiative lancée en 1989, si je ne me trompe pas. 1989, Madame la présidente, vous vous souviendrez le monde venait de traverser une grosse crise financière née de la crise de *subprimes* aux États-Unis qui a balayé l'Europe et qui a créé la récession partout dans le monde. Et puis là, on a vu que les caisses des états étaient vides mais les entreprises étaient très riches et là les états, à commencer par le G7, a décidé de mettre en place le GAFI qui hébergeait aujourd'hui à l'OCDE à Paris pour régulariser, pour amender, pour contrôler les places financières internationales. Évidemment, comme je disais au début, les places financières internationales, je parle de Genève, Jersey, Londres, Monaco et puis une autre des nouvelles places financières comme Maurice, Singapour, Seychelles, nous sommes en concurrence avec les places financières traditionnelles, si vous voulez.

Donc, l'OCDE a le pouvoir de nous *white list*, de nous *grey list*, de nous *black list* à leur guise alors qu'il devrait aussi balayer devant leur porte. Londres, Jersey, Monaco,

Genève ne sont-ils pas aussi des machines formidables à blanchir de l'argent sale ? Est-ce que leur place financière n'abrite pas l'argent provenant de l'évasion fiscale et des fraudes fiscales ? Est-ce qu'on a déjà entendu parler du GAFI *black*-listant Genève ou *grey*-listant Genève ou Londres ? Souvenez-vous, Madame la présidente, je suis sûre que vous vous souviendrez du livre du sociologue Jean Ziegler, ami du leader du MMM...

Madam Speaker : Il est venu à Maurice !

Mr Etwareea : Il est venu à Maurice d'ailleurs. Son livre intitulé 'La Suisse lave plus blanc'. Vous pouvez dire qu'il s'agit d'un ouvrage qui est dépassé maintenant. Certes, mais voilà les vieilles habitudes sont tenaces et nous apprenons régulièrement que des fonds illicites ont atterri dans telle ou telle banque à Lugano, à Zurich, ou à Genève.

Madame la présidente, mais tout cela ne doit pas nous empêcher de maintenir une place financière irréprochable chez nous. L'enjeu est de taille, on l'a déjà dit, 20,000 emplois cols blanc avec des salaires très élevés. Un secteur qui contribue 12,7 % à notre PIB et les amendements proposés par l'honorable ministre des Services financiers visent effectivement à faire le ménage. Car malgré les renforcements constants de nos législations à la matière, nous découvrons aussi que nos banques, les fonds d'investissement et autres véhicules spéciaux qui sont présents chez nous abrite des fonds douteux et qui portent atteinte à la réputation de notre industrie financière. Nous venons d'apprendre que les fonds liés au douteux financière américain Epstein aient pu transiter chez nous ou encore l'homme d'affaire malgache Mamy Ravatomanga qui détiendrait les dizaines des comptes bien garnis chez nous à travers des sociétés-écrans. Nous connaissons aussi le cas de Jean-Claude Bastos, la famille Santos et il y a autant d'enquêtes qui ont lieu ici localement et internationalement.

Due diligence, Madam Speaker, bonjour, les fonds arrivent malgré le fait que nous prétendons que nous avons une place financière propre. Un article publié l'an dernier, en décembre dernier par l'agence financière Bloomberg affirme que notre belle île compte sur une population 1,2 millions d'habitants, quelques 5,000 millionnaires, venus d'Afrique du Sud, Chine et ailleurs, attirés par un taux d'imposition forfaitaire, attirés par l'absence d'impôts sur la plus-value, attirés par les successions sans frais, sans compter les sociétés domiciliées à Maurice qui bénéficient parfois des exonérations pouvant aller jusqu'à 95%. Je ne dis pas qu'ils en touchent les mains sales, mais le cas de Mamy Ravatomanga, arrêté fin 2025, devrait nous interpeller. Il montre que notre place financière est poreuse.

Ce n'est pas un problème si tel ou tel homme d'affaires place son argent chez nous parce qu'il a confiance de notre place financière mais c'est un problème lorsque cet argent provient de l'évasion ou de la fraude fiscale de la part de particuliers ou d'entreprises multinationales. Et que voyons-nous, Madame la présidente, après les *paradise papers* qui avait ébranlé l'offshore mauricien en 2017 ? Le consortium international des journalistes d'investigation dénonçait deux ans plus tard, en 2019, la plate-forme mauricienne permettant aux multinationales de recourir à toutes sortes de pratiques comptables créatives pour minimiser les assiettes fiscales là où elles exercent leurs activités, de rapatriés leurs bénéfices à Maurice, qui applique une forte concurrence fiscale avec un taux d'imposition comprise entre 3 et 15 pour cent. Ce sont ainsi des milliards qui échappent au fisc de ce pays, notamment pays africains pour atterrir chez nous. Ce n'est pas un service que nous rendons à l'Afrique avec qui nous voulons établir des liens économiques privilégiés car il s'agit bien d'un continent d'avenir. On ne peut pas dépouiller l'Afrique pour faire croître notre place financière.

Madame la présidente, les pays africaines ne sont pas dupes par rapport à notre industrie financière et c'est pourquoi, plusieurs d'entre eux ont déjà dénoncé ou renégocié les accords de double imposition signés avec nous.

Madame la présidente, savez-vous que la minuscule île Maurice figure dans les top cinq des investisseurs pour 17 des quinze économies d'Afrique sub-sahariennes. Donc, nous sommes parmi les plus grands investisseurs en Afrique. En République Démocratique de Congo, Maurice est à l'origine de 63% des investissements directs étrangers surtout dans les secteurs miniers. Pourtant ces entreprises minières n'ont pas pignon sur rue. Ici, ils sont basés en Chine, ils sont basés au Kazakhstan ou en Suisse. Tous les cuivres, tous les cobalts, 67%, en effet, des cuivres et des cobalts et d'autres matières premières exploitées, les sièges de leur société se trouvent ailleurs et pas à Maurice. Mais l'argent de leurs bénéfices arrive dans notre place financière.

Selon la banque mondiale, les investissements étrangers effectués à partir de Maurice s'élevaient à 312 milliards de dollars en 2022 soit plus de 24 fois notre produit intérieur brute qui s'élevait alors à 13 milliards de dollars cette même année. Je crois aussi que nous sommes où nous étions jusqu'à que quelques changements interviennent. Nous étions le premier pourvoyeur des investissements directs en Inde. Allez savoir pourquoi et comment.

Madame la présidente, en tant que petite île au moyen limité, nous n'avons pas de choix que de conformer aux exigences du GAFI ou de l'Union européen. C'est dans ce contexte même que nous sommes partie prenante de l'accord BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting) signé en 1993 à St-Petersburg. C'était à la suite du sommet du G7 à Paris où les chefs d'états avaient parlé du BEPS. Donc, au sommet du G20 à St-Petersburg, en présence des plusieurs chefs d'états donc Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, et beaucoup chefs d'états mais surtout occidentaux avaient signé le BEPS. Et je disais comme avant, le monde sortait à peine d'une grosse déprime et il fallait vraiment trouver de l'argent et là, les dirigeants mondiaux ont pensé qu'il faut taxer les multinationales. Il ne faut pas permettre les multinationales de shifter leurs bénéfices dans des pays à juridisation plus facile en matière d'impôt.

Il fallait donc mettre de l'ordre dans les régimes fiscaux, éliminer la concurrence fiscale déloyale, lutter contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscale et faire de sorte que les multinationales qui brassent des milliards, payent des impôts là où ils font les bénéfices. Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, c'était la théorie. En réalité, la mise en pratique et le respect de BEPS est toute une autre affaire. Ce n'est pas le cas aujourd'hui. Et des pays, des places financières comme le nôtre, nous profitons de ces *bids* c'est-à-dire les multinationales continuent à apporter leurs bénéfices ici alors qu'ils ont gagné ces bénéfices dans d'autres pays où ils échappent aux fisca. Il y a un manque de justice et c'est cela que je suis en train de décrier.

C'est pourquoi, Madame la présidente, pour conclure, je plaide que notre place financière se consolide à travers les amendements proposés ; créer des emplois – on a encore besoin d'emplois –, attire des investissements et s'épanouisse non pas en profiteurs des législations insuffisantes et poreuses ici et ailleurs mais en construisant une place financière solide, digne de confiance, crédible, sans compromis, sur la transparence et sur l'éthique, sans complaisance et donc, respectée dans le monde entier.

C'est pourquoi je dis un grand oui au réforme législative proposée par notre collègue, l'honorable ministre des Services financier.

Madam Speaker: Merci beaucoup.

Mr Assirvaden: Madam Speaker, I beg to move for the adjournment of the debates.

Mr Mohamed seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 07 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Mohamed seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

I have two Members who want to make adjournment matters. Mr François, then you.

MATTERS RAISED

(6.59 p.m.)

RODRIGUES – AIR MAURITIUS LANDING PERMIT – REPATRIATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to address a matter of concern to the hon. Prime Minister, with regard to Air Mauritius landing permit and the repatriation of human remains to Rodrigues.

I am informed that out of the four ATR aircrafts currently in operation, only one, the oldest, is accommodating stretches and coffins. Madam Speaker, an inhabitant of Rodrigues, one late J.C.B., passed away last night in hospital in Mauritius. Although at times, landing permit approval takes time, in this particular case, it has already been secured. However, the family has been advised that the remains of the late J.C.B will now only be repatriated to Rodrigues by Friday or could be later. In some of the instances, delays extend to even more days. One can appreciate the distress and additional burden such delays impose on already vulnerable and aggrieved families in Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, two key issues arise in this regard. First, the difficulty in obtaining landing permits during weekends and delays and second, the delay in the repatriation of human remains within a reasonable timeframe. In most circumstances, such repatriation could and should be effected within 24 hours. Madam Speaker, is it not time for government to consider a special medical service by air?

In light of the above, may I respectfully request the hon. Prime Minister to cause his good office to look into this matter with a view to taking the necessary remedial actions so as to ensure a more timely, humane and efficient service for aggrieved families in the future?

Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, it causes a lot of distress, I am sure. I can't understand why. I know there was a problem with the aircrafts; one of them had a hard landing but that does not explain why. So, I will take up the matter with Air Mauritius.

Mr François: Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramkalawon.

(7.01 p.m.)

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 9 – LAVENTURE ELDERLY SHELTER –
DEPLORABLE STATE – MEASURES**

Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil): I have a humble request to the hon. Minister of Social Security regarding the shelter for the elderly used by the Laventure Senior Citizen Associations in Constituency No. 9, which is in a pitiful state in terms of its infrastructure, lack of ventilation, rusting of iron sheet and poles, water leakage and others – whether a site visit can be done by officers concerned and needful measures be adopted.

Thank you.

The Minister of Social Security, Social Integration and National Solidarity (Mr A. Subron): The needful will be done and you can accompany us when we do the visit.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Beehook, please.

(7.02 p.m.)

CWA – WATER CONNECTION REQUEST – FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil): So, Madam Speaker, my request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Energy and Utilities *qui gère* la CWA.

Madame la présidente, lorsque ceux qui font une demande de connexion à l'eau courante que ce soit résidentielle, agricole ou commerciale, doivent passer sous un processus. Ils ont besoin de l'*approval*, de ce qu'on appelle MOD. Et à la suite de la gestion de ce dossier, ils sont appelés à faire une contribution financière. Mais souvent, on se retrouve face à des situations où ceux qui veulent investir dans le secteur agricole que ce soit hydroponique

ou la culture vivrière ou même industrielle, ils sont obligés de payer ce qu'on appelle *financial contribution*.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to, first, try to expedite all requests pertaining to agricultural sectors and secondly, if he could levy this financial contribution for all requests for connection related to our agricultural sector because very often, I take this case of one person who wants to have one small hydronic project and he is being requested pay Rs 50,000 as financial contribution. Maybe this bill could be passed on to those people who sell villas at 40 or 50 million rupees but those who are willing to invest in the sector of agriculture.

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr P. Assirvaden): You are asking to waive it or levy it?

Mr Beehook: Waive it. I am sorry. Yes. Thank you, hon. Minister. So, can the hon. Minister please waive this financial contribution at least to those requests pertaining to the agriculture sector? Thank you.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, je vais reprendre l'affaire avec le MOD *committee* de la CWA.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

At 7.05 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 07 April 2026 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – SEIZED MOTOR VEHICLES–
NOVEMBER 2024-MARCH 2026**

(No. B/156) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the motor vehicles seized by the Financial Crimes Commission since November 2024 to date, which are owned, controlled or acquired by or on behalf of persons involved in illicit transactions and of retail value exceeding Rs3 million, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain and provide the list thereof, indicating –

- (a) the make, model and value thereof, and
- (b) whether fines were imposed and/or prosecutions initiated.

(Withdrawn)

**FOREIGNERS – RESIDENCE/WORK PERMITS – STATISTICS & COMPLIANCE
MEASURES**

(No. B/158) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the foreigners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the –

- (a) number thereof –
 - (i) currently employed, indicating the number thereof having overstayed their residence and/or work permits;
 - (ii) being students holding a work permit and not holding a work permit, respectively, and
 - (iii) sectors in which they are engaged, and
- (b) measures being taken to enforce compliance with the existing legislation.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/151)

**DIRECTOR OF AUDIT REPORT – FY 2024-2025 – CONTENT ASSESSMENT &
CORRECTIVE MEASURES**

(No. B/159) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Director of Audit Report for financial year 2024-2025, he will state whether an assessment of the content thereof has been carried out and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the corrective measures being envisaged in relation thereto, and
- (b) how the introduction of Performance-Based Budgeting is expected to help redress the situation.

(Withdrawn)

PORT LOUIS HARBOUR – NEW MASTER PLAN – INVESTMENT PHASES

(No. B/160) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the implementation of the New Master Plan for the Port Louis Harbour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Ports Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) the proposed initial phase-wise investment envisaged thereunder, including the timelines, sources of financing and priority projects, and
- (b) whether consideration is being given for the participation of international partners in the development, operation or management of the Port Louis Harbour and, if so, give details thereof, including the proposed partnership model.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/150)

**BASIC RETIREMENT PENSION – AGE ELIGIBILITY INCREASE – SOCIO-
ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/161) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the increase in the eligibility age to benefit from the Basic Retirement Pension, he will state whether, in the context of the preparation of the forthcoming Budget, his Ministry has carried out any study

or socio-economic impact assessment of the effects thereof on vulnerable groups, including low-income earners and, if so, indicate the main findings and conclusions thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**EDB – MR S. M., DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – APPOINTMENT
TERMS & CONDITIONS**

(No. B/162) Mr R. Beehook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mr. S. M., Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to his date and terms and conditions of appointment, indicating the circumstances under which his contract was renewed and the terms and conditions of his new contract.

(Withdrawn)

**WOMEN MURDERS & SUSPICIOUS DEATHS – 01 JANUARY 2026-MARCH 2026
– INQUIRIES**

(No. B/163) Mr B. Babajee (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to women, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof having been reportedly murdered or found dead in suspicious circumstances since 01 January 2026 to date, indicating –

- (a) where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereinto, and
- (b) whether –
 - (i) an online assistance service for crime prevention is available thereto, and
 - (ii) consideration will be given for a counselling facility to be put at the disposal of women at risk.

(Withdrawn)

**MAURITIUS – VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE 2026 REPORT –
RECLASSIFICATION – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

(No. B/165) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Mauritius being reclassified as a democracy in the Report of the Varieties of Democracy Institute 2026, he will state whether a detailed comparative analysis of the factors and indicators which, according to the reports thereof of the past five years highlighting the evolution of Mauritius, has been carried out and, if so, indicate whether same will be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT – NEW RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/166) Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd., information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

MONEY LAUNDERING – DRUG TRAFFICKING PROCEEDS – ARRESTS & SEIZED VEHICLES

(No. B/167) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the laundering of money suspected of being proceeds of drug trafficking, since November 2024 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission and the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) number of suspected drug dealers arrested in relation thereto, and
- (b) list of vehicles including cars, motorbikes and quads and pleasure craft seized in connection therein, indicating the total estimated value thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**POLICE QUARTERS – RETIREMENT ON MEDICAL GROUNDS –
ACCOMMODATION POLICY REVIEW**

(No. B/168) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof having had to vacate their lodging in police quarters on retiring due to sudden or serious illness, indicating –

- (a) the delay granted thereto and their families to find alternative accommodation, and
- (b) whether consideration will be given for a review of the current practice in such circumstances.

(Withdrawn)

**SDDS+ STATUS – MAURITIUS UPGRADING – MEASURES ADOPTED &
BENEFITS**

(No. B/169) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the upgrading of Mauritius to the Special Data Dissemination Standard Plus (SDDS+) status by the International Monetary Fund, he will state the –

- (a) measures taken by Government that led thereto, and
- (b) key benefits associated therewith, particularly, in terms of access to financing, investment prospects and economic resilience.

(Withdrawn)

**HON. PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER RESIGNATION – SUBSEQUENT
RESIGNATIONS**

(No. B/170) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent resignation of Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK as Deputy Prime Minister, he will state the other resignations that have followed in the wake thereof in

relation to our missions abroad, parastatal bodies, advisory positions, State-owned enterprises and State institutions.

(Withdrawn)

**HON. PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER RESIGNATION – PRIOR MEETING –
RESIGNATION REASONS**

(No. B/171) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent resignation of Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK as Deputy Prime Minister, he will state whether he met the Honourable Member in the days prior to the said resignation and, if so, indicate the reasons put forward by the latter.

(Withdrawn)

**FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 – MBC MATCHES BROADCASTING –
ARRANGEMENTS**

(No. B/172) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister of Finance, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the forthcoming FIFA World Cup 2026, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the arrangements being made, if any, for the broadcast of the matches thereof on the channels of the Corporation.

(Withdrawn)

RDA – ROAD DECONGESTION – STUDY

(No. B/195) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to road congestion, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to whether a study has been carried out to identify the reasons thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the road decongestion strategy put in place.

(Withdrawn)

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – STATISTICS & JOB INITIATIVES

(No. B/196) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to youth unemployment, he will state –

- (a) the current rate thereof gender-wise, region-wise and by educational level, and
- (b) outline the programmes being implemented to promote employment opportunities for young graduates.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUAN ARTISTS – CULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT – OPPORTUNITIES

(No. B/197) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation signed with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for 2026–2029, he will state the initiatives envisaged thereunder, indicating how the implementation thereof are expected to ensure equitable opportunities for Rodriguan artists and practitioners in exchanges, training and heritage promotion.

(Withdrawn)

INTERNATIONAL WARS & CLIMATE CHANGE – IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY – AGRICULTURAL POLICY

(No. B/201) Mr F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to the impact of international wars and climate change on food security and self-sufficiency, he will state whether he has re-prioritised the agricultural policy of the country in the face of potential food supply chain disruptions and, if so, give details thereof.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/194)

MAURITIUS HANDBALL ASSOCIATION – FINANCIAL REVAMPING STRATEGY

(No. B/202) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to handball, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry for the revamping thereof in Mauritius, indicating whether his Ministry proposes to help the new Managing Committee of the Mauritius Handball Association in

reimbursing a debt of more than Rs 10 M following the organization of the Under 17 Beach Handball World Championships in Mauritius in 2017.

(Withdrawn)

TOURISM ACT – MARINE MAMMALS PROTECTION – AMENDMENTS

(No. B/203) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the proposed introduction in the Assembly of amendments to the Tourism Act for the enhanced protection of marine mammals within our waters, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

LAGOONS – SWIMMING & SPEED LIMIT ZONES – DEMARCATION ZONES

(No. B/204) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the lagoons in Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) the present status of the demarcation of swimming zones and speed limit zones, indicating the number of reported accidents or incidents having occurred thereat over the past six months, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the proposed maintenance, repairs and reinstatement of the said demarcation zones, giving details of any ongoing or planned works, timelines and key milestones in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER REQUIREMENT

(No. B/205) Mr A. Ramdass (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether in regard to the Fisherman Registration Card, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether it is a prerequisite for the applicants for the issue thereof to hold a clean Certificate of Character for eligibility thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMS 2025 – PERFORMANCE REMEDIAL
MEASURES**

(No. B/206) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the performance of Mauritian candidates in the last Cambridge International Examinations, he will state the remedial measures being taken to address same and the responsibility of the different authorities, particularly, the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division, in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**LEASING COMPANIES – REGISTERED & OPERATING IN MAURITIUS –
FATF NON-COMPLIANCE**

(No. B/207) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port-Louis South & Port-Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the leasing companies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission/Bank of Mauritius, information as to the current number thereof registered therewith/operating in Mauritius, indicating whether any one of these companies has reportedly failed to comply with international standards such as Financial Action Task Force.

(Withdrawn)

**BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL – UNCLAIMED CORPSES ISSUE – MEASURES
ENVISAGED**

(No. B/208) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Brown Sequard Hospital, he will state the current number of unclaimed corpses in the mortuary thereof, indicating since when same have been lying there and the measures being envisaged to deal with this issue and whether his Ministry is in presence of requests from medical colleges to be handed over same for research purposes and, if so, where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION – FOOD SECURITY – CONTINGENCY PLAN

(No. B/209) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

whether, in regard to food security, he will state the contingency plan being put in place, if any, in the light of the current geopolitical situation.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/194)

FREE INTERNET SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES – VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

(No. B/210) Ms M. R. Collet (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Free Internet Scheme, he will state the number of persons listed on the Social Register having benefitted free installation and free monthly fiber internet service thereunder, indicating the measures taken, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to ensure the said scheme bridges the digital divide among vulnerable households.

(Withdrawn)

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SYNTHETIC DRUGS – REPORTED CASES & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/211) Mr C. Ramkalawon (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to the secondary schools, he will state the number of reported cases of introduction, possession and consumption of synthetic drugs thereat over the past ten years, indicating the measures being taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MINOR F.A. – HOSPITALISATION – MEDICAL CONDITIONS

(No. B/212) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port-Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to minor F.A., admitted to the Brown Sequard Hospital and subsequently transferred to the Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Child Development Unit, information as to the –

- (a) name of the shelter of which he was an inmate;
- (b) reasons for the hospitalisation, and
- (c) medical conditions thereof.

(Withdrawn)

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR – NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES – CLASSIFICATION

(No. B/213) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the premises which formerly

hosted the Council of Ministers and the Office of the first Prime Minister of Mauritius, namely, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, both situated on the second floor of the Old Government House, he will state whether consideration will be given for the classification thereof as national heritage sites.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – ROAD SAFETY – SPEED TABLES INSTALLATION

(No. B/214) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to road safety, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, information as to the actions taken, if any, in response to requests from residents of Constituency No. 11 for the enhancement thereof in the highly residential areas thereof, including the installation of speed tables or other traffic calming measures, indicating whether site surveys, feasibility studies or traffic assessments have been carried out and, if so, give details thereof, including implementation timelines and interim measures being envisaged, if any.

(Withdrawn)

**MAHEBOURG WATERFRONT – STEEL JETTY REPLACEMENT –
ESTIMATED COST**

(No. B/215) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed replacement of the steel jetty situated at the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) estimated cost, and
- (b) expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MAURITIAN GLOBAL BUSINESS SECTOR – SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
– INDIA DTAA – IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

(No. B/216) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to the Mauritian Global Business Sector, she will state whether her Ministry has conducted a thorough and detailed assessment of the impact of the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of India in the case of Tiger Global International II Holdings vs. The Authority for Advance Rulings

thereon, particularly concerning the future eligibility of Mauritius-resident entities for capital gains tax exemptions under the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.

(Withdrawn)

UNEXPLOITED AGRICULTURAL LAND – REASONS – MEASURES PROPOSED

(No. B/217) Mr R. Etwareea (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre D'or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to agricultural land, he will state the total extent thereof currently unexploited country-wide, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) measures being proposed to incentivize the cultivation thereof to ensure self-sufficiency and food security.

(Withdrawn)

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING – NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK – PROPOSAL

(No. B/218) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to transitional housing, he will state whether his Ministry has put in place a comprehensive national policy framework to govern same and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MALDIVES – DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SUSPENSION – ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

(No. B/219) Dr. Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Maldives, he will state whether following the recent suspension of our diplomatic relations therewith, his Ministry has drawn an updated list of Mauritian nationals currently residing or employed thereat, indicating the communication channels and consular mechanisms established, if any, to provide timely guidance, assistance and protection thereto and whether any Mauritian national has reached out accordingly and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**BRITANNIA POST OFFICE – PROPOSED RENOVATION – COMPLETION &
REOPENING DATES**

(No. B/220) Mr R. Jhummun (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the proposed renovation of the Britannia Post Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Mauritius Post Ltd., information as to the expected start, completion and reopening dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

GRAND SABLE FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTING FACILITIES

(No. B/222) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the project for the installation of lighting facilities at the football ground of Grand Sable, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Grand Port, information as to the expected date of implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**RODRIGUES LABOUR OFFICE – LABOUR DISPUTES – JURISDICTION
REVIEW**

(No. B/223) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to labour disputes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rodrigues Labour Office, information as to the number thereof registered thereat since 2023 to date in respect of which employers involved therein but domiciled in Mauritius could not be sued before the Industrial Court in Rodrigues, indicating the measures taken by his Ministry regarding same, including whether consideration is being given for proposed amendments to be brought to the relevant legislation to ensure that the place of performance of work remains the primary criterion for territorial jurisdiction.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG MUSEUM – RENOVATION WORKS – REOPENING TIMELINE

(No. B/225) Mr C. Lukeeram (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Museum, he will state the expected re-opening date thereof, giving details of the renovation works which have been or will be carried out thereat.

(Withdrawn)

**LABOUR OFFICERS – TRAINING SESSIONS – RODRIGUES OFFICE
PARTICIPATION**

(No. B/228) Ms D. Henriette-Manan (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the professional development of Labour Officers, he will state the number of training sessions, workshops and seminars organised by his Ministry therefor since January 2025 to date, indicating the –

- (a) themes covered, particularly, regarding the enforcement of the Workers' Rights Act and the Occupational Safety and Health regulations
- (b) number of officers from the Rodrigues Labour Office invited to attend same, and
- (c) measures taken to ensure that training is decentralised or made accessible via digital platforms for officers stationed in Rodrigues.

(Withdrawn)

**NOUVELLE FRANCE – WATER PUMP FAILURES – WATER RESTORATION
MEASURES**

(No. B/229) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water pump failures at Nouvelle France over the past few months, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the short-term and long-term measures being envisaged respectively, to restore a stable and continuous water supply thereat, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)