No. 21 of 2026

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 07 JULY 2026

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS *(Oral)*

MOTION

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

BILLS *(Public)*

ADJOURNMENT

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. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed, GCSK	Minister of Housing and Lands,
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. 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 Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hon. Mrs Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra
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
Deputy Clerk	Gopall, Mr Navin
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
Clerk Assistant	Naika-Cahaneea, Mrs Prishnee
Clerk Assistant	Tayelamay, Mr Niteshen
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Adviser, Hansard Matters	Allet, Mrs Marie-Hélène Caroline
Assistant Hansard Editor	Hurdoss, Ms Doushika
Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer	Jeewoonarain, Miss Prittydevi
Acting Serjeant-at-Arms	Seegobin, Mr Somduth

MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 21 of 2026

Sitting of Tuesday 07 July 2026

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

The National Anthem was played

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. 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 Mauritius Hydrographic Services Bill (No. XI of 2026). (In Original)

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the Gambling Regulatory Authority for the year ended 30 June 2023.

(c) The Certificate of Character Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 120 of 2026)

B. Ministry of Housing and Lands

(a) The Real Estate Agent Authority (Transaction Fees) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 125 of 2026)

(b) The Real Estate Agent Authority (Registration and Fees) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 126 of 2026)

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

(a) The Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Registration of Recycler and Exporter of Waste) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 123 of 2026)

(b) The Beach Authority (Management of Public Beach) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 124 of 2026)

D. Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

The Fisheries (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 121 of 2026)

E. Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning

The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) (Amendment) Rules 2026. (Government Notice No. 119 of 2026)

F. Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations

The Occupational Safety and Health (Centralised Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2026. (Government Notice No. 122 of 2026)

G. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

(a) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 118 of 2026)

(b) The Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2026.(Government Notice No. 127 of 2026)

H. Ministry of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the financial statements of the St Antoine Planters Co-Operative Trust for the year ended 30 June 2025. (In Original)

I. Ministry of Local Government

The Report of the Director of Audit on the amended financial statements of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix for the year ended 30 June 2024.

J. Ministry of Arts and Culture

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Ramayana Centre for the year ended 30 June 2025.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Creole-speaking Union for the year ended 30 June 2024. (In Original)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CONSUMER PROTECTION – PRICE STABILISATION FUND – EXCISE DUTY LEVY – INSPECTIONS & CONTRAVENTIONS

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr G. Lesjongard) *(by Private Notice)* asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to consumer protection, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) whether any study was carried out prior to the introduction of the Price Stabilisation Fund, indicating the impact thereof as at June 2026, giving a breakdown of the expenditure of Rs1.4 billion incurred thereunder, further indicating the names of the importers or operators having benefitted therefrom and amount disbursed in each case;

(b) whether he will table the list of products to be impacted by the excise duty levied on sugar content of sugar sweetened products with effect from 20th June 2026 and on PET bottle, respectively, and

(c) the number of inspections carried out and contraventions booked by the Consumer Affairs Unit in relation thereto, since the presentation of the Budget Speech 2026-2027 to date.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to consumer protection and the Price Stabilisation Fund, I wish to inform the House as follows.

As regards part (a) of the question, prior to the introduction of a Price Stabilisation Fund subsidy mechanism, my Ministry carried out an assessment of the commodities to be covered in consultation with relevant agencies, including the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Ministry of Finance and all different consumer associations.

The assessment focused on the movement of international prices, freight costs, exchange rate pressures, landed costs, household consumption patterns, and the need to provide targeted relief on essential goods. The objective was to ensure that the subsidy would be directed to products which have a direct impact on household expenditure and that the benefit would be passed on to the consumers in a transparent and measurable manner.

Government approved the introduction of a fixed quantum subsidy mechanism under the Price Stabilisation Fund at the end of August 2025.

The first list of products covered milk powder, edible oil, infant milk powder, baby diapers and processed cheese. The scheme was subsequently extended in December 2025 to

canned mackerel and pilchards, adult diapers and three categories of pharmaceutical products, namely anti-hypertensive, cardiovascular and anti-diabetic medicines. The pharmaceutical component was implemented as from February 2026.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the choice of a fixed quantum subsidy model was deliberate. Under this model, a fixed amount of subsidy is applied per eligible unit or per kilogram, instead of an open-ended percentage subsidy. This provides better fiscal control, allows the benefit to be visible to consumers, and reduces the risk of uncontrolled expenditure.

The scheme is administered through the Mauritius Revenue Authority platform. Eligible operators submit their claims electronically based on actual sales. The claims are then verified before payment is effected. This creates a clear audit trail and provides traceability across the supply chain.

As at June 2026, the assessment carried out by my Ministry indicates that the subsidy has been effectively transmitted to consumers across the product categories concerned. Price monitoring exercises have shown immediate reductions in retail prices following implementation and these reductions have generally been sustained over time without significant supply disruptions or market distortion.

For food items already covered under the scheme, comparative monitoring across representative brands has shown reductions generally ranging between Rs10 and Rs55 per unit. The scheme has, therefore, contributed to stabilising prices of selected essential commodities and has provided direct relief to consumers.

My Ministry has also continued to strengthen its overall price monitoring system. Since June 2025, The Price Analysis and Monitoring Division has approved 31,426 costing returns for Mauritius and 1,889 costing returns for Rodrigues, thereby allowing the Ministry to monitor prices and markups across the market more effectively. Since the start of the year, 12 weekly monitoring and analytical reports have been conducted to assess the impact of the external factors on commodities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the amount of Rs1.4 billion, this amount covers subsidies granted on milk powder, edible oil, infant milk powder, baby diapers, processed cheese, canned mackerel and pilchards, adult diapers, and the three selected categories of medicines for diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, based on the latest MRA information submitted to my Ministry as at 16 June 2026, total subsidy payments already effected to eligible traders

amounted to approximately Rs710.1 million. There are also some Rs366 million under process for payment and Rs280 million paid to bakeries.

The main payments effected were as follows –

1. Milk powder accounted for approximately Rs362 million;
2. Edible oil accounted to approximately Rs246 million;
3. Processed cheese accounted for approximately Rs41.7 million;
4. Infant milk powder accounted for approximately Rs26.5 million;
5. Baby diapers accounted for approximately Rs11.2 million;
6. Canned products accounted for approximately Rs6.4 million;
7. Adult diapers accounted for approximately Rs4.3 million;
8. Anti-diabetic medicines accounted for approximately Rs4.2 million;
9. Anti-hypertensive medicines accounted for approximately Rs4 million, and
10. Cardiovascular medicines accounted for approximately Rs4 million.

Refunds are made through the MRA platform and only after claims submitted by eligible operators have been verified. The mechanism distinguishes between claims submitted, claims under process, claims verified, claims adjusted and claims paid.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the estimated annual cost of the present further extension is Rs258.8 million for Mauritius. An additional Rs1.4 million is required for Rodrigues, bringing the total estimated annual cost to Rs260.2 million.

The extension to Rodrigues is being made on a price equalisation basis so that consumers in Rodrigues benefit from the same retail prices as consumers in Mauritius.

The new list of products was selected because these items are widely consumed and have a direct impact on the household food basket. They include sources of protein, staple substitutes and essential products used by families with infants.

The extension of the scheme also requires amendments to the relevant Consumer Protection Regulations to incorporate the additional commodities, prescribe the applicable subsidy parameters, set maximum pack sizes, and provide for eligibility and refund procedures.

The existing MRA platform will continue to be used for operator registration, stock declaration and refund processing. This avoids creating a new administrative structure and ensures continuity, transparency and traceability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the names of importers or operators, the amount disbursed to each, the detailed operator-wise breakdown is being tabled.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the budgetary measures referred to, at paragraphs 274 and 276 concern products which may be impacted by changes in taxation under the purview of the Ministry of Finance and the Mauritius Revenue Authority, and not the Price Stabilisation Fund.

Regarding PET bottles, the excise duty of Rs2 per unit is currently applicable on mineral waters, aerated waters and soft drinks. There has been no change in the rate.

However, the coverage of the Rs2 excise duty is being extended to cover plastic bottles containing goods, with effect from 01 October 2026.

I am tabling the following lists provided to me by the Ministry of Finance –

- the list of products on which the excise duty on sugar sweetened products has been increased from 12 cents per gram of sugar to 15 cents per gram of sugar, with effect from 20 June 2026, and
- an exempt list of plastic bottles, and a list of plastic bottles on which the excise duty will apply.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, the Consumer Affairs Unit has continued to intensify market surveillance to ensure compliance with consumer protection legislation, price control measures, price display requirements and obligations relating to subsidised goods.

Officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit carry out inspections in supermarkets, retail shops, pharmacies, hardware stores, trade fairs and other commercial premises.

For the period July 2025 till 06 July 2026, the Consumer Affairs Unit inspected 11,567 trade premises, detected 1,240 contraventions, out of which 1,215 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued, and carried out 595 sampling exercises.

In addition, 2,541 complaints were registered on the Citizen Support Portal, of which, 89.5% were successfully resolved. The main areas of complaint and investigation relate to the defective goods, unfair consumer trade practices and missing price labels.

Since the presentation of the Budget up to 06 July 2026 –

- The number of inspections carried out is 515.
- The number of contraventions established whereby Fixed Penalty Notices were issued is 43.

The main breaches detected relate to failure to display prices, non-compliant price labels, unfair trade practices, selling above approved prices or mark-ups, failure to submit required costing returns and non-compliance with obligations relating to subsidised goods.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is not only subsidising essential goods. We are also strengthening the framework around the subsidy to prevent abuse, improve transparency, and ensure that the benefit reaches consumers.

My Ministry will continue to monitor prices, verify compliance, take enforcement action where required, and work with the Mauritius Revenue Authority to ensure that the Price Stabilisation Fund remains targeted, transparent and accountable.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will note that only 35% has been disbursed from the Price Stabilisation Fund by the MRA during last year. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will confirm if his Ministry has conducted any study on the effect of the measures of paragraphs 274 and 276 of the Budget, and will he table the exact list of products impacted by these measures?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I do not have a problem with this. I will table it.

I have to say that the percentage which the hon. Leader of Opposition is saying, which is 25%, is really wrong. We will disburse Rs1.4 billion.

Mr Lesjongard: This is the figure the Minister gave to the House.

My first part of the question was related to whether your Ministry has conducted a study on the effect of the measures of paragraphs 274 and 276 of the Budget; you have not replied to that part. You have said only you will table the list.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Well, it is a measure of the Government. We will need to come with a measure.

Mr Lesjongard: So, there is no study which has been conducted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measure at paragraph 276 will take effect as from 01 October. Can the hon. Minister explain how prices of products in plastic bottles have already been increased by manufacturers and distributors? Did his Ministry enquire about this? And have these distributors and manufacturers been fined?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: This is a taxation measure. We all know plastic is bad for the environment. This is why we came with this measure.

Mr Lesjongard: Again, he is not replying to my question!

The Deputy Speaker: I do not have any control on his answer.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the levy of Rs2 on plastic bottles, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that this measure will impact more than 2,000 products consumed on a daily basis in this country? Is the hon. Minister aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that even healthy products like *dilo coco* will be heavily penalised by this measure?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these products are not controlled products. Some importers and some manufacturers can also absorb the cost. It is not a controlled product.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they will not absorb the cost. It will be passed on to consumers. Now, how does the hon. Minister reconcile that a levy has been introduced in order to discourage the use of plastic but no alternative to plastic bottles has been provided to manufacturers?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: People need to adapt. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at least, we care for the population and we care for the environment, unlike the previous government.

Mr Lesjongard: He is again not …

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: You know what the previous government did?

Mr Lesjongard: He is not replying to my question!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: They changed the law. Do you know to do what? To import *ti papier* at the sum of Rs460 million for people for drug abuse.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us limit ourselves to the plastic bottles, okay?

Mr Lesjongard: He should stop beating around the bush, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Mohamed: It was biodegradable.

Mr Lesjongard: Now, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House what guarantee do we have that the tax revenue generated from these excise duties will be reinvested into obesity and diabetes prevention and as well as for the protection of the environment?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning the diabetes, in fact, when we look at look what we have concerning the sugar tax, I have to say that Mauritius has one of the highest prevalence rates of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases in the region. These diseases impose an enormous human and financial burden on families, on our healthcare system and on our economy. At least, we need to make people recognise the risk factor of obesity, Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: He is not the Minister of Health, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: You have a question?

Mr Lesjongard: My question is to the Minister of Commerce, not to the Minister of Health.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, put your next question.

Mr Lesjongard: He is giving us a lecture.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is a teamwork.

Mr Jhummun: *To pa ti bizin deman li!*

Mr Lesjongard: Now, with hundreds of retails adjusting their pricing structures this very week, can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the exact number of inspections and contraventions carried out by the Consumer Affairs Unit of his Ministry since those measures have been announced in the Budget?

Mr Mohamed: He just said.

(Interruptions)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I just said over 500 inspections; 515 inspections. You need to listen to my answer. Fixed penalties notices – 43.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Quiet! Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: In the Budget Estimates at page 417, there is a forecast of 11,000 inspections to be carried out. However, no recruitment of staff is being proposed in the budget. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why no budget was allocated for the recruitment of staff and how will the same number of staff carry out more than 4,000 inspections this year?

Mr Mohamed: *Dan* Committee Stage *to'nn res trankil.*

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are doing well. We are doing more than the number of inspections targeted.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what additional resources have been allocated to the Consumer Affairs Unit to enforce price controls and investigate complaints?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Can you repeat the question? I was reading.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I will repeat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House what additional resources have been allocated to the Consumer Affairs Unit to enforce price controls and investigate complaints?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We have a software coming. So, any person *depuis son salon, la personne peut consulter depuis son portable, les différents prix à travers Maurice.*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. A. Duval! No?

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Minister explicitly stated that parallel importation of essential medicines will lead to price reduction and promised a new legislation to achieve this. May I ask the hon. Minister when will he table this promised legislation?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is a question of weeks.

Mr Lesjongard: It is a question of?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Weeks.

Ms Anquetil: Weeks!

Mr Mohamed: *Seki to pann kapav fer zame. To ti pe tap latab to ti pe dir to pa ti kontan...*

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House if the budget announcement of Rs2 billion allocated for alleviating rising prices of commodities forms part of the measure as the Rs10 billion announced last year? Did you follow what I said?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is a great measure. People are happy outside. Right. We are not doing like the previous government.

Mr Lesjongard: My question is whether it is the same...

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Losing money, paying two legal advisers. Do you know to the tune of what, at the STC? Rs157 million. Let me table the list.

(Interruptions)

Ms Anquetil: Incroyable!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Beechook!

Mr Lesjongard: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he is not replying to my question.

The Deputy Speaker: I have no control on his reply.

Mr Lesjongard: It is the same measure as announced last year.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. I have given the floor to hon. Beechook then hon. A. Duval, then hon. Ms Anquetil and then back to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Beechook: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Question and answer! Simple.

Mr Beechook: Yes. Number one: can the hon. Minister please enlighten the House on the current rate of inflation in Mauritius? And secondly, is it possible to request those suppliers to put a sticker on those government-subsidised products so that people know that the State is doing an effort to support them?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all, since 01 July 2026, all retail outlets must put on their label 'SP', which means Subsidised Products or 'MRP', which means Maximum Retail Price, maximum markup. Also, concerning inflation, it is around 4% presently, compared to when the MSM was in power, it was around 9, 10, 11, 12%.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. A. Duval!

Mr A. Duval: May we know from the hon. Minister, with regard to the Rs2 levy on plastic bottles, what is the plan to adapt? Because we understand that there is no alternative to plastic products so the consumer is, today, condemned to pay that Rs2 levy; it is a tax. So, what is the alternative that is being proposed now with the money that will be drawn in as revenue? How much of it will be reinvested for recycling and to finding and subsidising better alternatives? What are the alternatives that you are offering besides taxing people?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we need to educate the people so that we switch to other measures. For example, for bottled water, we can switch to water filters. It is as simple as this and you will save money, people will save money and also, it is extremely good for the environment.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Anquetil, you have a question?

Mr A. Duval: ... *enn alternativ.*

Ms Anquetil: I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House of the current status of the investigations into the alleged fraud involving flour financed *à travers* the Price Stabilisation Fund, please? Thank you.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the FCC is investigating into this matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We have found that flour and ration rice were in Comoros island.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, there is an inquiry by the FCC. This question is not related to the main question.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is because the previous government put measures...

The Deputy Speaker: That is alright.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: ...so that people could do fraud.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: This is what happened in the past.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of Opposition!

Mr A. Duval: *Enn dernier.*

Mr Lesjongard: *Ale.*

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we understand from the hon. Minister's reply that this will apply only to bottled water. He is encouraging to buy – what is it? Bottle machine. But it applies to every plastic product in this country.

The question, therefore, is with regard to alternatives, there are billions of rupees to be collected. So, what is the plan, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Is this a levy or is it a tax? Be frank about what it is!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Well, we need to protect the environment. This is what we are doing.

Mr A. Duval: How much is going to be invested?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Hon. Minister, recently, Reunion Island has witnessed a drastic drop in prices of Mogas and Gas Oil. Given the drop in global crude oil, may we know from the hon. Minister when can Mauritian consumers expect a drop of at least Rs10 or even the Rs20 promised by the Government on Mogas and Gasoil?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the price of Mogas at Reunion Island on 19 June 2026 was Rs105. Yesterday, the price of Mogas at Reunion Island – Rs113, and do you know what is the price in Mauritius? Rs64.25!

Ms Anquetil: *Mal renseigné! Mal renseigné!*

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: *Kot to viv twa?*

The Deputy Speaker: No more questions? Okay.

(Interruptions)

Okay, we...

(Interruptions)

No further questions. Now we go to the questions addressed to the...

(Interruptions)

Can we have some quiet, please?

Hon. Prime Minister, questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister!

Before you answer questions, let me announce the following.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/988 and B/1006 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

I call the hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

BIRTH, MARRIAGE & DEATH CERTIFICATES – RETRIEVAL DELAYS – QR-GENERATED COPIES' NON-ACCEPTANCE

(No. B/961) 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 Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Civil Status Division, information as to whether the issue of excessive delays and long queues at its office at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building for the retrieval thereof and of the non-acceptance of QR-generated copies thereof downloaded from the MoKloud Application by banks, the Apostille Department and notaries are being addressed and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Registrar of the Civil Status that generally, once an applicant reaches the service counter, the processing time ranges from five to ten minutes, depending on the nature of the request. More complex requests may take between 15 and 20 minutes to process.

However, there are a few instances where members of the public experienced longer waiting times. This situation is attributable to a shortage of staff, with 17 vacancies in the grade of Civil Status Officers.

I am informed that action has already been taken to fill these 17 vacancies, and the interviews have already been completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Civil Status Division has digitalised its services to enable citizens to download electronic copies of birth and marriage certificates through the MoKloud application.

However, the acceptance of QR-generated copies of birth and marriage certificates by banks, notaries and the Apostille section is subject to the specific requirements governing their respective functions.

One such case is the Apostille of documents which, as per its requirement pursuant to Convention of 05 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents, has to certify the authenticity of the signature, the capacity in which the person signing the document has acted and, where appropriate, identity of the seal or stamp which the document bears. Hence, QR-generated documents cannot be used at this point.

To facilitate the wider acceptance of such electronic documents, my Office is currently examining the existing legal and operational frameworks, in consultations with the State Law Office.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, the hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal!

DOMAINE LES PAILLES – LAND LEASE-RELATED LEGAL ACTIONS – SMART CITY PROJECT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/962) 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 Domaine Les Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

(a) legal actions have been initiated or decision taken to suspend/defer/discontinue the leases of the land thereat and, if so, why, and

(b) the Smart City Project thereat has been assessed and whether any complaint regarding same stands referred to the Financial Crimes Commission and, if so, where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the State Investment Corporation entered into a Shareholders' Agreement on 29 August 2015 with Yihai International Investment Management Limited, a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands and wholly owned by Mr Li Hai, who is a Chinese National, for the development of a Smart City project at Domaine Les Pailles.

For this purpose, Yihai Investment Ltd was incorporated as a domestic company on 15 September 2015 to undertake the development of the Smart City project. The Economic Development Board granted a Smart City Certificate to Yihai on 04 October 2019.

The State Investment Corporation's capital contribution to Yihai consisted of 97 Arpents of land, together with the existing buildings at Domaine Les Pailles, comprising principally of five restaurants and their associated infrastructure. This contribution was valued at Rs573.7 million and represented 49% of the issued share capital of Yihai.

The other shareholder, namely Yihai International Investment Management Limited, was required to contribute an initial cash injection of Rs598 million, along with materials and equipment valued at more than Rs600 million, which together were intended to constitute the equity contribution in Yihai of approximately Rs1.2 billion. However, as at date, Yihai has injected only Rs440 million. This, in itself, is a major red flag.

The project initially comprised the construction of 135 villas, 1,029 apartments, 1 office tower, 1 commercial building, 1 school, 1 hotel, 1 health clinic, 1 club house and 2 service buildings to be developed in 3 phases under the Smart City Scheme. The project was designed to integrate the existing Domaine Les Pailles theme park while preserving the historical infrastructure of the site.

In addition, in December 2015, the State Investment Corporation, through its subsidiary, the Guibies Properties Ltd, entered into an Administration and Management Agreement with Yihai for the management of the existing Equestrian Centre at Domaine Les Pailles for a period of 19 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is another scandalous project under the previous Government and it has several dimensions. I am informed by the State Investment Corporation, that it has not leased the prime land of Government of Mauritius but rather, there has been an outright transfer of the land and buildings to Yihai.

These properties are now owned by Yihai with Yihai International Investment Management Limited as the major shareholder. This prime land is, therefore, no longer under the control of the State Investment Corporation. It has instead been transferred to Yihai which is under the control of a non-citizen who has failed to deliver and honour his commitments and he is now also under investigation by the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC).

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some disturbing facts have also been uncovered by the new management of the State Investment Corporation –

(i) I am informed by the State Investment Corporation that no due diligence was conducted by the latter on Yihai International Investment Management Ltd and on Mr Li Hai himself, prior to the signature of the Shareholders' Agreement.

(ii) When Yihai was set up, it was agreed in the Shareholders' Agreement that all cheques will be signed by two signatories, namely Mr Li Hai and a representative from the State Investment Corporation. Initially, it was Mrs Banoomatee Veerasamy, who was later replaced by Mr Anoop Nilamber.

However, in March 2018, there was a major departure from the above arrangements, whereby the Board of Directors of Yihai approved that only Mr Li Hai will sign all the cheques up to an amount of Rs10 million. For all cheques above Rs10 million, Mr Li Hai and Mr Anoop Nilamber would be the signatories. This devious and unusual mechanism allowed Mr Li Hai to empty the bank account of Yihai singlehandedly. Mr Li Hai took the liberty to sign several cheques and withdrew a total of Rs107 million. To be precise, he withdrew an amount of Rs9,431,240 on 10 different occasions, amongst others, over a very short span of time, 3 months; from March 2022 to May 2022.

(iii) Furthermore, Mr Li Hai and with Mr Anoop Nilamber, approved a further board resolution on 31 July 2019 to pay a net monthly salary of Rs500,000 to Mr Li Hai. The income tax payable thereupon was to be borne by the company, Yihai, as opposed to Mr Li Hai himself. As from February 2026, the new management of State Investment Corporation has put an end to this scam.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the State Investment Corporation that, since the transfer of the land and buildings, Yihai International Investment Management Ltd has been in persistent breach of the terms of the Agreements and has failed to discharge its contractual obligations.

The main breaches include –

(i) a failure to meet its full capital contribution of Rs1.2 billion, comprising Rs598 million in the form of cash of which Rs158 million remains unpaid and the remaining in the form of building materials and construction equipment which have never been brought in;

(ii) a substantial project delays with only four villas and one apartment block of the 29 units completed;

(iii) unpaid administration and management fees to Guibies Properties Ltd totalling Rs10.6 million;

(iv) severe governance issues such as non-submission of audited accounts since 2019;

(v) lack of accountability to shareholders;

(vi) breach of the conditions of its Smart City Scheme Certificate, and

(vii) failure to pay a guaranteed dividend of Rs500 million over three years to the State Investment Corporation as per the Agreement they had signed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 16 May 2025, the former Deputy Prime Minister, together with other Ministers, carried out a site visit at Domaine Les Pailles, to take stock of the status of the project and the infrastructural development carried out thereafter. He immediately, in a press conference, highlighted that the Domaine Les Pailles has been in a state of severe neglect for several years, and that the historic site remains underdeveloped and abandoned.

The Equestrian Centre was also in a pitiful state, with allegation of ill-treatment of the horses and ponies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, such a gross mismanagement of this project occurred over the period of 2015 to 2024 under the previous Government.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that –

(i) SIC has initiated legal proceedings to prevent Yihai International Investment Management Limited from exercising its voting rights in respect of unpaid share capital, and to restrain the sale of villas and apartments by Mr Li Hai;

(ii) on 28 May 2024, the State Investment Corporation obtained an interim order prohibiting and restraining Yihai from selling or otherwise disposing of part of its assets, including apartments belonging to Yihai, and

(iii) Guibies Properties Ltd issued a Notice of Termination of the Administration and Management Agreement on 24 October 2025, with effect from 30 November 2025, requiring Yihai to surrender possession of the stables, the horses and the ponies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Economic Development Board that a comprehensive assessment of the project has been undertaken following which a report was forwarded to the former Deputy Prime Minister in July 2025. As per the report, there have been delays in project implementation owing to changes to the business plan, governance concerns, serious issues relating to capital contribution and the absence of updated audited financial statements, as I said, since 2019.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the light of the serious shortcomings identified, the more so that the matter has been referred to the FCC in May 2026, the EDB is considering revoking the Smart City Scheme Certificate in accordance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework.

In so doing, the EDB is also taking into account the interests of the State Investment Corporation after evaluating all the risks involved in the project, including legal, financial, regulatory and investment-related risks, so as to ensure that any decision does not prejudice the interests of the State Investment Corporation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the State Investment Corporation that, following allegations made to the FCC by two Chinese nationals, there exists a dispute in the financial participation of Mr Li Hai in the shareholding of Yihai International Investment Management Limited. The two Chinese nationals have also alleged that Mr Li Hai is engaged in money laundering, following which, the FCC has lodged a provisional charge against Mr Li Hai.

Following an application by the FCC, the Supreme Court issued a freezing order in respect of Mr Li Hai's bank accounts and on all the assets of Yihai Investment Limited. The State Investment Corporation has additionally, in May 2026, lodged a formal complaint with the FCC against Mr Li Hai for fraud and misappropriation of funds.

The FCC is currently investigating the alleged malpractices involving Mr Nilamber and Mr Li Hai. And yet, I should add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the same Mr Nilamber was subsequently appointed as CEO of the State Bank of Mauritius by the previous Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a high-profile case involving significant public assets, prime lands of Government, a historic national site, gross mismanagement, dishonesty by shareholder Yihai International Investment Management Ltd and a loss on investment.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Je vous remercie. Est-ce que, dans le cadre de l'enquête de la *FCC*, les autorités auraient pris contact avec les autorités chinoises pour demander une quelconque assistance ? Si oui, quelles sont les retombées ?

The Prime Minister: I am not in a position to say that at this stage because the inquiry is ongoing.

Ms J. Bérenger: Une dernière question ?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, next question!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Au-delà des millions qui sont dus par rapport au loyer des écuries du Domaine Les Pailles, il y a également, si je ne me trompe pas, encore quatre poneys survivants sur les lieux. Est-ce que des actions seraient envisagées pour assurer le bien-être de l'animal, étant donné qu'ils sont dans un très mauvais état ?

The Prime Minister: Of course, they should have done that already, if they have not.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

The hon. Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central!

MUSLIM RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES REGISTRATION – DEADLINE EXTENSION

(No. B/963) 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 Civil Status (Muslim Family Council) Regulations 2005, he will state whether consideration will be given for a further extension of the deadline for the registration of Muslim religious marriages celebrated over the periods January 1982 to 13 November 1987 and 01 December 1990 to 21 August 2022, in respect of persons who have failed to effect same within the prescribed time limit, for their eligibility to the Basic Widow’s Pension and, if not, indicating the alternative measures, if any, being envisaged.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Finance Act 2022 introduced amendments to the Civil Status (Muslim Family Council) Regulations 2005 to provide for the

registration of Muslim religious marriages celebrated in accordance with Muslim rites, other than civilly, during the periods from 01 January 1982 to 13 November 1987 and from 01 December 1990 to 21 August 2022. Under these transitional provisions, where such marriages remained unregistered as at 22 September 2022, both spouses, or the surviving female spouse could apply to the Muslim Family Council for its registration, provided that the application was made no later than 31 December 2022.

The purpose of this measure was to allow spouses through religious marriages celebrated according to Muslim rites, other than civil marriages, during the period mentioned, to make applications to the Council for the registration of their marriage, and if the marriage was registered by the Council, to qualify for the Basic Widow's Pension.

I am informed by the Muslim Family Council that, during the registration exercise, 368 applications were received. Of these, 322 applications were approved and certificates of registration were issued, including 109 submitted by surviving spouses. There were 46 applications which were refused for non-fulfilment of the prescribed requirements, of which, 31 were submitted by surviving spouses.

I am further informed that, after the expiry of the registration period on 31 December 2022, an additional 38 applications for registration were received from surviving spouses. As the statutory deadline had expired, those applications could not be processed.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the issue of granting a further extension of the deadline for the registration of Muslim religious marriages is presently under consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister for your answer. May I request you, in the event that this consideration is agreed, that adequate communique be circulated by the Muslim Family Council so that these 38 women, as you said, can have at least their pension being paid to them in due time? Thank you for the compassion that you have shown in answering this question.

The Prime Minister: Yes, this will have to be communicated.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

PENSION REFORM – COMMISSION OF EXPERTS - MEMBERS - REVOCATION

(No. B/964) 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 Commission of Experts on Pension Reform, he will state whether consideration will be given for the revocation of the appointment of the members thereof for non-submission of its final Report to the Steering Committee prior to the presentation of the Budget 2026-2027 and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me be absolutely clear and unequivocal. The members of the Commission of Experts on Pension Reform have discharged their responsibilities with the utmost diligence, independence, professionalism and integrity.

I would like to reiterate what I stated in my reply to the Private Notice Question on 25 June 2026. The members of the Commission are accomplished professionals who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields, both nationally and internationally.

I consider it wholly unfair and unjustified that the members of the Commission should be blamed for decisions announced in the Budget Speech relating to pension reform. Their role has been to provide independent expert advice and recommendations. It is, therefore, neither appropriate nor fair to attribute to the Commission the policy decisions contained in the Budget Speech.

Thus, the question of revoking their appointment does not arise.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, members of the Commission have been appointed for a period of 18 months as from October 2025 with clear terms of reference, in consultation with the World Bank and the IMF, and approved by Cabinet in September 2025. The Commission was mandated to examine the three pillars of the pension system, namely –

(i) the Basic Non-Contributory Pensions, in particular the Basic Retirement Pension;

(ii) the Contributory Pension Schemes, and

(iii) the Voluntary Private Pensions, including personal retirement savings plans and occupational pension schemes offered by employers.

After only eight months, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of intense consultations and deliberations, the Commission submitted its Interim Report in May 2026 in line with its terms of reference. This report was presented on the 20 May 2026 to the Steering Committee on Pension Reform chaired by myself and comprising –

(a) the then Deputy Prime Minister;

(b) the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries;

(c) the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity;

(d) the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning;

(e) the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations;

(f) the Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives;

(g) the Junior Minister of Finance, and

(h) the Junior Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must emphasise that Members of the Steering Committee made a number of comments and suggestions which was taken on-board by the Commission. There was broad consensus from members of the Steering Committee on the direction of the reforms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to the urgency of the fiscal situation, especially the still very high level of public debt estimated at 87.7 percent of GDP as at June of this year, and given that the Commission had completed its analysis and recommendations on the first pillar of the pension system, in particular the Basic Retirement Pension, Government decided to act immediately on the policy recommended by the Commission in its Interim Report.

To facilitate the implementation of this reform, we are setting up, as recommended by the Commission –

(a) a unified Independent Pensions Regulatory Authority to regulate the entire pension system, and

(b) a Central Pensions Administration Bureau which will regroup all state sponsored schemes into one place to digitalise and facilitate service to members and pensioners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Commission has still approximately nine months remaining to submit its final report, in particular on pillars two and three of our pension system. In addition to its substantive findings and recommendations contained in the Interim Report, the Commission is expected to set out the modalities and implementation roadmap required to give effect to the recommendations. Specifically, the final report would provide guidance on the legislative, administrative, and institutional measures necessary to implement those recommendations, including –

(a) a comprehensive review of the legislative framework governing pensions and retirement benefits, including the Pensions Act, the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act, the Workers' Rights (Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund) Regulations 2020, the National Pensions Act, the National Savings Fund Act, the President's Emoluments and Pension Act, the National Assembly (Retiring Allowances) Act, and the Social Contribution and Social Benefits Act;

(b) the setting up of the National Pensions and Provident Fund, and

(c) the appropriate mechanism to be put in place for managing and investing the funds under the National Pensions and Provident Fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise that the reform of pillar two and pillar three of the pension system, that is, as I mentioned earlier, the contributory pension schemes and the voluntary private schemes are not yet finalised. In particular, the establishment of the National Pensions and Provident Fund and the modalities will have to be worked out. The implementation will require a dedicated legislation, extensive consultations with stakeholders, and also guidance from the proposed Independent Pensions Regulatory Authority. The future of the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund as well as the National Savings Fund will also be carefully considered, taking into account both the short and long-term interests of the workers. Subject to Cabinet approval, the necessary legislation is expected to be introduced before the end of the financial year 2026-2027.

I also wish to assure the House that the proposed reforms will not leave any worker worse off. On the contrary, every worker will have an individual dedicated account, similar to the arrangements that existed under the National Pensions Fund and furthermore, the reforms

will not result in any increase in contribution rates for either employees or employers. The CSG Contributions that are currently credited into the Consolidated Fund will be progressively redirected to workers' individual accounts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these reforms are being done in the wider interest of workers and to protect their future earnings after their retirement.

Coming back to the question, the Commission has been entrusted with a mandate of significant national importance, and Government has every confidence in the expertise, independence and professionalism of its members to discharge that responsibility.

Accordingly, I wish to reiterate that the question of revoking the appointment of the members of the Commission does not arise. I have requested them to continue the important work entrusted to them and to complete their mandate by submitting their final report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that with the reform of the pension system, as a responsible Government we have not chosen the easy way out and to try to get political mileage, but rather our objective is to save the system to ensure that all the elderly obtain a pension in future and that the future generation is not burdened with an unsustainable pension system.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, your question?

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he does not find that the Commission has acted outside of the mandate, conferred by the supreme authority of the Executive, that is, Cabinet, which decided in September, in fact, on 26 September, to set up a Steering Committee which shall provide guidance to the Commission, but the most important, which shall assess and act upon the recommendation of the Commission. Yet, according to the reply of the hon. Prime Minister last week, it is clear that a presentation was made to the Steering Committee, questions were raised, but the final report was never assessed and acted upon by the Steering Committee. Therefore, does he not find now …

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr A. Duval: … that it has acted outside of its mandate?

The Prime Minister: No, not at all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Not at all! I thought I explained that there were three pillars that the Commission was mandated to examine – three pillars. The first one was the Basic Non-Contributory Pensions, in particular the Basic

Retirement Pension, the second pillar was the Contributory Pension Schemes, and the third was the Voluntary Private Pensions, which included private savings, retirement savings plans and occupational pension schemes offered by employers.

For the first pillar, they have already done the work. It was urgent because you know what the debt is. So, it was urgent to do something about it. We do not wait for another nine months.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hon. Prime Minister, I raised the issue of possible conflict of interest last time. Can I ask you whether you are aware that one of the members of that Commission has recently obtained a contract for consultancy services by the Ministry of Finance itself?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware. What consultancy services are you referring to?

Mr Lesjongard: It is consultant for investment by advisory services to the National Pension Fund and National Saving Funds Investment Committee.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that he has been given a particular task to advise on this. He is advising generally.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question on this.

Mr A. Duval: Yes, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must reiterate, whether the question was urgent or not, it does not matter. Cabinet had laid down the modalities.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, put your question now.

Mr A. Duval: My question is coming. And this has been, in fact, reaffirmed by the hon. Minister of Social Security himself. In his press conference, he said and I quote. He said …

An hon. Member: Question!

Mr A. Duval: *Sa mem kestion la !*

Whether he will agree with that statement –

« … nou'nn poz kestion, ek lerla sipoze donn nou koumandir enn version sifre exakteman ki pe propoze ek sipoze donn nou enn interim report, me nou pa'nn gagn

interim report la zamin. Okay, et le interim report, mo pakone ki'nn arive inn soumet au Premie minis et se sa ki finn rant dan bidze. »

Therefore, in light of what I have quoted from the Cabinet decision – the modalities to assess and to act upon – does he not find, here, that this has been blatantly disregarded?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: No, it has not been. What has happened is that the Interim Report was shown to all the members of the Steering Committee in way of slides, not a report itself but in way of slides. Time was urgent. We had to act. We had the interim report. We decided to go ahead. The two other pillars, as I said, are not yet ready.

Mr A. Duval: You should talk to your Minister of Social Security. This is not what he said at all.

The Prime Minister: I speak to him every day.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/967, B968, B/969, B/971, B/972, B/973, B/974, B/975, and B/977.

Time is over.

Hon. Member, the Table has been advised that PQ B/1007 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Local Government.

I now call the hon. Fourth Member for Rodrigues, hon. Edouard.

NATIONAL CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIP – ROAD ACCIDENT – SAFETY & SECURITY PROTOCOLS

(No. B/978) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the accident met by a cyclist during the recent National Cycling Championship, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(i) the safety and security protocols in place for the said event;

(ii) whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto, and

(iii) the care and assistance provided to the said cyclist, and

(b) state the measures being envisaged to upgrade safety and regulatory standards for future cycling competitions held on public roads.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/978 and B/980 together as they relate to the same subject matter. I am informed that an unfortunate accident occurred during the Mauritius National Road Cycling Championship, held on Sunday 28 June 2026 at approximately 08:50 hours involving cyclist M. L. on a bend near Chassé Betafo, before Midlands Village.

I am further informed that the circumstances surrounding the accident are currently under investigation by the Mauritius Police Force. The inquiry has not yet been completed and it not would be appropriate for me to comment further.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the response by the C-Care ambulance which was providing medical cover for the event was immediate. First aid was administered to the injured cyclist before being transported to C-Care Darné hospital for emergency treatment. However, due to the prohibitive cost of treatment, the President of the Mauritius Cycling Federation called me and following my personal intervention on the same day, arrangements were made for Mr M. L. to be transferred to Victoria Hospital where he is currently receiving specialised medical care.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry and the Mauritius Cycling Federation have remained in close contact with the family of Mr M.L. as well as with the medical team overseeing his treatment in order to monitor his condition and extend all possible support.

I am informed that his condition is currently stable and that he is awaiting further surgical procedures. I personally paid him a visit and met with his mother whereby I assured her of my personal support and that of my Ministry. My Ministry acted promptly and immediately on the next day of the event. We requested a full report about the incident. A copy of the report from the Federation is being tabled.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the safety measure and security protocols in place for the event, I am informed by the Mauritius Cycling Federation that the following protocols which are in accordance with the *Union Cycliste Internationale* guidelines for organising of cycling events were in place. Prior to the event, approval of the race route by the Mauritius Police Force and appointment of *Union Cycliste Internationale* Commissioners to supervise the competition and ensure compliance with the applicable UCI regulations.

During the event, an official led vehicle positioned ahead of the leading group of each race fitted with a ‘Beware – cycle race’ warning sign and a flashing beacon to alert motorists, an ambulance accompanying the race throughout the event to provide immediate medical assistance whenever required.

- 08 police motorcycle escorts, 09 police officers deployed at strategic locations and major intersection along the route;
- 1 private motorcycle assisting with race security and communication;
- 13 trained race marshal position along the course to assist with traffic management and rider safety;
- security barriers installed at the finish area to protect riders;
- officials and spectators and an official race convoy comprising lead, and support vehicle.

While the Mauritius Cycling Federation considered that comprehensive safety arrangement has been put in place, it also recognises that road cycling, by its nature, carries inherent risks, particularly when competitions are conducted on public roads. The Federation has also pointed out that even where roads are temporarily closed, it is not possible to eliminate all risks entirely.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the above, this unfortunate incident called for a thorough assessment of the existing framework governing road cycling competition. Accordingly, my Ministry will engage in consultation with the Mauritius Cycling Federation, the Mauritius Police Force and all other relevant stakeholders with a view to reviewing and where necessary, strengthening the existing safety and regulatory framework.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to assure the House that my Ministry and the Mauritius Cycling Federation are working closely together to identify appropriate means of supporting Mr M.L. and his family during this difficult period. The Mauritius Cycling Federation has approved the organisation of a fundraising campaign in support of the family.

In addition, I am informed that Mr M.L. is covered under the Federation insurance program which includes employer's liability, group personal accident and public liability insurance. Furthermore, at the level of my Ministry, we have the Athlete Welfare Scheme. The case of Mr M. L. for any assistance deemed appropriate, in accordance with the

applicable provision, is being considered. This scheme has already assisted various athletes in the past.

My thoughts and I am sure those of the whole House are with Mr M. L. and his family and I sincerely wish him a full speedy recovery.

Mr Edouard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister if he will consider the construction of a velodrome to house cycling competitions in the future?

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, consideration may be given for the construction of a velodrome for training purposes as well as for indoor cycling competition, but it would not suitable for road races. A velodrome may be used as a complement to road cycling rather than a replacement. Many elite cyclists train on the track because it develops speed, bike control and fitness that transfer well to the road, but they still spend significant time training on roads to prepare for the specific demand of road racing.

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

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre est-il au courant que la police, ce jour-là, contrôlait la circulation uniquement pour la tête de la course, c'est-à-dire le peloton de tête et non pour les coureurs qui étaient détachés ? Comme c'était le cas pour le malheureux cycliste M. L.

Donc, dans ce contexte, l'honorable ministre peut-il dire à la Chambre quelles conditions et mesures son ministère compte imposer aux fédérations, pas uniquement à la fédération de cyclisme, qui organise des compétitions sur route, afin de mieux protéger la vie des sportifs mauriciens et étrangers ?

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, like I said in my reply, inspection and proposed race route by federation officials, identification of potential safety risks and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, submission of the race route and operational plan to the Commissioner of Police for approval. These details have already been worked out with the Police Force. So, if we have to work together with the federation, like I said in my reply, for further measures to be taken, I will do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Henriette-Manan!

Ms Henriette-Manan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister give us more details on the Athlete Welfare Scheme he mentioned? Thank you.

Mr Nagalingum: Can you repeat the question, please?

Ms Henriette-Manan: The Athlete Welfare Scheme, can I have more details, please? Thank you.

Mr Nagalingum: It is a long list. If I can table it. I will table it.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. One last question, hon. Edouard.

Mr Edouard: May I ask the hon. Minister if the Athlete Welfare Scheme is extended to athletes in Rodrigues?

Mr Nagalingum: Of course! It is included in the welfare scheme.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, because your question has been replied. One last question.

Mr Quirin: *Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.* L'honorable ministre est-il au courant que les frais de clinique du cycliste dépassent les R 100 000 et que le cycliste n'est couvert que par une assurance à hauteur de R 25 000. Il l'a dit lui-même, qu'il y a un *scheme* qui pourrait éventuellement couvrir les frais. Je lui demande ici, dans cette Chambre, est-ce qu'il prend l'engagement au niveau de son ministère d'aider le cycliste à régler cette note ?

Mr Nagalingum: Effectively, the Government has increased the budget for the federation and we are working on it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fourth Member for Port Louis South and Montagne Longue!

STATE AGE PENSION – GENDER-BASED REDUCTION RATE

(No. B/979) Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the proposed reduced State Age Pension payable as from the age of 60, he will state the rationale for not providing for a differentiated applicable reduction rate between men and women, having regard to the difference of 6.8 years in the respective life expectancy thereof in Mauritius, as published by Statistics Mauritius.

Mr Subron: I thank the hon. Member for this question, but I am afraid to say that the hon. Member might have gotten the facts wrong in his question.

First, the difference in life expectancy at birth between males and females, which I presume is what the hon. Member is referring to, is not 6.8 years.

Second, it is not appropriate to use life expectancy at birth to calculate the actuarial reduction factor.

Third, we cannot have differentiated actuarial reduction factor – one for males and one for females.

Let me get the facts straight. First, with regard to life expectancy at birth, according to the latest figures from Statistics Mauritius for the year 2025, provided by the Ministry of Finance, the difference in life expectancy at birth between males and females was 7.3 years, not 6.8 years, as stated by the hon. Member. I am tabling the latest statistics provided by Statistics Mauritius and the Ministry of Finance.

Second, for the purpose of pension, it is more appropriate to use expectancy at age 60 instead of life expectancy at birth. According to Statistics Mauritius, the difference in life expectancy at age 60 between males and females was 4.1 years in 2025. I am tabling the latest statistics from Statistics Mauritius provided by the Ministry of Finance.

Third, in determining the actuarial reduction factor, it is a standard international practice not to differentiate between males and females. The actual reduction factor is, therefore, based on the average life expectancy at age 60 and assumption as to investment yields. This principle is already enshrined in law under the Eighth Schedule to the National Pension Funds Act, which provides for the application of a monthly actuarial reduction of 0.45%.

I am informed that the commission has recalculated the actuarial reduction factor at 0.5% per month based on new demographic data available. The proposed reduced State Age Pension in the Budget is based on the same principles as the Basic Retirement Pension. It is universal, non-contributory, that is, payable to all eligible persons regardless of whether they are men or women.

Moreover, although women generally live longer than men, Government does not consider it appropriate to apply different reduction rates based on gender. The reduced State Age Pension is designed to treat all eligible persons equally. So, the same reduction rates will apply.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the record, I was quoting from the available figures of last year.

That being the case, does the hon. Minister agree then that the average life expectancy of a man is 70 years old? You can round it up here. It is 70.6. Under the State Age Pension, if he takes his pension at 60 for the amount of Rs11,589, he will earn Rs400,000 more than if he takes it at 65 at the quantum of Rs16,555.

Therefore, does he not agree that all males will take their pension at 60? Is that something that we can agree on?

Mr Subron: I have already stated the stand of the Government.

Mr A. Duval: This is not what I said.

The Deputy Speaker: Listen to the answer!

Mr Subron: We do not intend to differentiate between male and female on gender basis.

Secondly, the issue of reduced pension age is being examined by a Cabinet Economic Committee, which has been set up by the Cabinet last Friday.

It will meet under the chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister this Wednesday to *inter alia* study all the adjustments, if necessary, in relation to the reduced SAP, following the decision of the Government not to go ahead with the means test of the initially proposed SAP.

Mr A. Duval: May I ask the hon. Minister, secondly, with regard to women, it is the same thing. When you look at what they stand to gain over 18 years and what they stand to gain if they take it at 65 over 13 years, it is marginally different.

Therefore, once we have established that, I will ask the hon. Minister, the State Age Pension as it stands, is it not the case that while a 30% increase to Rs21,500 was promised by him, it is, in fact, exactly, a 30% decrease that is being offered now under the State Age Pension of 60 years! Does he not agree on that as well?

Mr Subron: This is a matter of opinion.

Mr A. Duval: No, it is facts!

Mr Subron: If you have any opinion, you can state it. The committee will study everything tomorrow at 2:30 p.m.

Mr A. Duval: It is facts!

One more question!

The Deputy Speaker: Question, not a statement.

Mr A. Duval: My last question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. To add insult to injury, the previous pension system was to be increased year by year. But according to that reform here, according to paragraph 29, I will quote 27.3 (e) of the Annex to the Budget, we see that whoever elects [and everybody will elect to get the pension at 60] will do so on a fixed rate basis until their death. Can you also confirm that this is the case?

Mr Subron: The initial question was on life expectancy between males and females.

Mr A. Duval: You have said it in your reply.

Mr Subron: Okay, I have already replied to this question. To the second question, whatever adjustment between 60 and 70 will be discussed tomorrow.

*CHAMPIONNAT DE MAURICE DE CYCLISM*E – MR M.L. ACCIDENT – ROAD CYCLING RACE SAFETY

(No. B/980) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the accident met by cyclist Mr M. L. during the 'Championnat de Maurice de Cyclisme sur route', he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

  (i) circumstances thereof, and

  (ii) safety measures in place before and during the race, indicating whether same complied with prescribed safety protocols, and

(b) state whether consideration will be given for a review of the existing framework governing road cycling competitions, including, temporary closure of roads or enhanced police escort arrangements.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/978)

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour.

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

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated! Yes, we are on questions. Can you guide me to the next question? B/981, *c'est bien cela*? Yes, so, hon. Rookny, I just wanted to check.

SHIV PRAKASH ROAD, TRIOLET – NEW WATER PIPELINE – START & COMPLETION DATES

(No. B/981) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the persistent water supply problems at Shiv Prakash Road, in Triolet, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to whether approval has been obtained for the laying of new water pipeline thereat and, if so, indicate where matters stand –

(a) the estimated cost thereof, and

(b) where matters stand, including the expected start and completion dates of the works.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, je suis informé qu'une dizaine d'abonnés situés le long de Shiv Prakash Road à Triolet rencontrent des problèmes de faible pression d'eau en raison de la longueur du réseau de tuyaux alimentant leur habitation. Afin de remédier à cette situation, la CWA procédera à l'installation d'un nouveau tuyau dédié, d'une longueur d'environ 160 mètres le long de cette route, afin d'assurer un meilleur provisionnement en eau aux abonnés concernés. Ces travaux seront réalisés par les équipes internes de la CWA. Les travaux vont débuter le mercredi 8 juillet 2026 et devraient être achevés dans un délai de trois semaines, soit d'ici le 27 juillet 2026. Le coût estimé des travaux, y compris les raccordements domestiques, s'élève autour de R 455 000.

Madam Speaker: No questions? Good. Anyone else? No? Hon. Apollon!

ELECTRIC-POWERED AUTOCYCLES, BICYCLES & SCOOTERS USE – MINORS – LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

(No. B/982) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the use of electric-powered autocycles, bicycles and scooters on public roads, particularly by minors, he will state whether consideration is being given for the introduction of an appropriate legislative and/or regulatory framework in relation thereto.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for raising this important issue which has regrettably become a source of increasing concern,

particularly in relation to road safety. We have all witnessed the growing popularity of electric-powered autocycles, bicycles and scooters on our public roads. This trend, especially prevalent among minors, is driven by affordability, convenience and attractiveness of these vehicles to meet short distance trips, but also due to an extreme laxity in compliance with legislation where applicable, both by dealers in such vehicles at the time of sale and the purchasers, whereby issues relating to registration, insurance, need for appropriate licences and protective clothing are not given due consideration. Mindful of the pressing challenges posed by the presence of these vehicles on our roads, Government at its meeting on 16 January 2026, invited my Ministry to legislate, *inter alia*, on the mandatory wearing of helmets by riders of electric scooters.

Madam Speaker, consultative meetings have been held at the level of my Ministry with TMRSU and NLTA and the Police on the subject. The following matters have been thoroughly addressed –

- the prevalence of unsafe riding practices;
- the use of such vehicles without appropriate safety equipment, especially by youngsters;
- the absence of insurance coverage in certain instances and consequently liability concerns in case of accidents;
- the operation of high-powered electric vehicles by underage and untrained individuals;
- the roads along which such vehicles may be authorised to run and where they should be prohibited.

Hon. Members might have noted that youngsters are riding scooters on our highway, the motorways, heedless of the risks arising. There was full consensus among all institutions on the need for compulsory wearing of protective helmets for all riders, including cyclists. Furthermore, the following regulatory measures were also considered –

(i) compulsory registration of cycles, pedal cycles and electric bikes;

(ii) prescription of a minimum age for persons authorised to ride pedal cycles and electric bikes on public roads;

(iii) mandatory use of high visibility clothing, that is, reflective jackets, between sunrise and sunset, and

(iv) the introduction of speed limits for electric bikes.

Madam Speaker, it has been observed that road safety risks for riders are often compounded by the lack of awareness regarding existing traffic regulations. This poses a danger not only to the riders themselves, but also to other road users, including pedestrians. It is therefore vital that we balance innovation and accessibility with public safety and responsible road use. In fact, the hon. Member raised this very concern with me during the sensitisation campaign held at Mahebourg on 09 May 2026 in the context of Road Safety Week 2026. On that occasion, I had informed all those present that my Ministry is already drafting the provisions to be incorporated in the regulatory framework pertaining to electric-powered two wheelers.

I wish to reassure the hon. Member, and to end, Madam Speaker, that the proposed legislative provisions are currently being refined by my Ministry in consultation with TMRSU, NLTA and Police department. I will surely seek the agreement of Government to my Ministry issuing drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office to regulate on enhancing the road safety of what we consider as an important segment of our vulnerable road users. This will add, inevitably, to the long list of drafting instructions my Ministry has already issued to the Attorney General's Office. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, one supplementary!

Mr Apollon: I thank the hon. Minister for his serious concern. With the recent incident involving a minor of 15 years old on electric bike where there was no insurance coverage, can the hon. Minister inform the House if an insurance coverage is under study for such vehicles?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, Madam Speaker, like I mentioned in my reply, the absence of insurance coverage in certain instances, and consequently, liability concern in case of accident is a concern and is being looked into. I thank the hon. Member for this question.

Madam Speaker: You mean the imposing of an insurance?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. Going forward, this is what the committee comprising of the TMRSU, NLTA and the Police are looking into and recommending.

Madam Speaker: Good, that is it? Next question, hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue!

E-HEALTH PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION & COST

(No. B/983) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the E-Health project, he will state –

(a) where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating the expected completion date;

(b) the total cost thereof, indicating the cost incurred as at date, and

(c) whether a Special Purpose Vehicle has been set up for the administration thereof and, if so, indicate the names of the officers appointed thereto and/or directors thereof and the selection process used therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, as you are aware, the e-Health Project was initially launched, under the Indian line of credit, prior to the 2014 general elections, but was shelved for unknown reasons following the change in government in December 2014. It was reinitiated only in 2022, where the former government, through a portfolio agreement with the UNDP, appointed as implementing partner, with full responsibility for procurement and overall project management. Accordingly, the contractors were selected by the UNDP together with the former government. Since then, the implementation of the project is being managed by the UNDP.

Initially, the system was expected to go live by December 2024. This deadline was not met due to serious operational, technical, and coordination delays, largely resulting from gaps in planning, insufficient groundwork, and limited oversight by the former government. In particular, site readiness constraints, including electrical works and connectivity issues flagged by the UNDP, remained largely unaddressed, thereby delaying successful implementation.

Madam Speaker, following my assumption of office in November 2024, together with my colleague, hon. Dr. Avinash Ramtohul, we reviewed the project. We were faced with two options: either to scrap the project altogether or to salvage it. Given the substantial public

investment already made, we chose the latter, despite the herculean task of rescuing a project that had fallen significantly behind schedule. We then took immediate actions to address the shortcomings, accelerate progress, and move the project into implementation, with a clear focus on delivery and tangible outcomes.

To that end, an inter-ministerial committee was established to provide close oversight, strengthened coordination, enhanced accountability and transparency, and ensure timely resolution of issues in line with the project objectives and revised timelines.

As of today, Madam Speaker, the Ministry, through the Digital Health Agency, is closely monitoring the project at granular level through a structured Project Monitoring Committee, bringing together the UNDP, the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, users and other relevant stakeholders. The PMC is addressing key implementation issues and operational requirements for the effective nationwide roll out of the first phase. The pilot phase is being used to address matters relating to system stability, completeness of patients' records and data, and scalability.

The platform stabilisation stage is expected to be completed within the next three months, after which deployment will be extended towards the regions and health centres. Change management principles should also be applied to ensure full user adoption in the best interest of patients and the healthcare sector.

I am pleased to apprise the House that the system is actively being used and tested by Medical Records Officers, Nursing Officers, doctors, specialists, and pharmacists. As at date, the e-Health System has recorded more than 153,200 patient registrations, 287,800 visits, 32,700 file mappings, 43,000 appointments, 8,000 admissions, 7,400 discharges, and 281,100 doctors' consultations.

Madam Speaker, in Region 3, the system has already been deployed across 29 sites, including New Flacq Hospital, Bel Air, Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Medi Clinic, and several health centres.

The pilot project has also been extended to other regions. In Region 4, deployment has started at Grand Bois and L'Escalier Medi Clinics, while file mapping is underway at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. In Region 5, the system is already deployed at the ENT Hospital, with file mapping is underway at the National Cancer Centre.

For Regions 1 and 2, preparatory works are ongoing. These includes infrastructure readiness at Brown Sequard Mental Healthcare Centre and Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital, as well as electrical upgrade planning at SSRN Hospital and its sub-stations.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the expected completion dates, the pilot phase, including the platform stabilisation, is expected to be completed by October 2026. The system will thereafter be progressively scaled up across all hospitals and health centres, with full implementation targeted by the end of 2027.

It should, however, be recognised that the e-Health Project is a major and complex national undertaking, involving multiple technical, operational, and institutional dependencies. An agile implementation methodology is being adopted, allowing progressive deployment, testing, and refinement based on user feedback, technical performance, and lessons learned. The progress and timelines will be continuously monitored and adjusted where necessary to ensure controlled and sustainable implementation without compromising system quality, cybersecurity, patient's safety, or continuity of health services.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a total amount of USD 7,420,768 has been paid to the UNDP, under a portfolio agreement, which covers e-Health Project as well as several other digital initiatives. The portfolio agreement also includes, but not limited to, the Laboratory Information Management System, Border Health Control System, including all-in-one travel form, digital health strategy and legislation, capacity building, as well as change management, project management, and implementation support by the UNDP.

Of this amount, USD 6,975,652, representing approximately 94% of the total amount, has already been paid before November 2024 by the former government, while the remaining USD 445,116 was paid by the present government in June 2025.

I am further informed that following a procurement exercise conducted by the UNDP, the contract, specifically, for the e-Health Project was awarded to a consortium, in January 2024, for an amount of USD 4,440,576.66. Out of this amount, I am informed that the UNDP has already disbursed a cumulative sum of USD 2,746,091.19 to the consortium through a series of payments, each linked to the successful completion of specific contractual deliverables and milestones. The remaining amount of USD 1,694,484.47 is still pending and will be paid by the UNDP following successful completion of all remaining deliverables.

In addition, associated infrastructural works, including electrical works, network readiness, IT equipment, and other site readiness requirements, are being financed separately, under the government budgetary provisions, in support of phased roll out of the project, amounting to Rs257.1 million, and payment is being effected in accordance with the terms of payment.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to a Cabinet decision of 16 August 2024, Government approved the setting up of a dedicated entity for the administration and long-term sustainability of the e-Health Project. The company, namely Digital Health Co. Ltd, was thereafter incorporated on 19 September 2024, under the Companies Act 2001, as a state-owned company operating under the aegis of my Ministry.

Government has also approved that the company be administered by a board comprising, among others, representatives of my Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the Attorney General's Office. The board members were appointed in accordance with the relevant provisions and procedures under the Companies Act 2001. It should be noted that the names of directors of any company are available in the public domain and may be obtained through the Registrar of Companies.

Nevertheless, for the sake of transparency, I am tabling the full composition of the present board, together with the qualifications of its members.

Madam Speaker, the company is currently being managed by a senior public official in the grade of Permanent Secretary, designated as Officer-in-Charge, with support from officers of my Ministry.

As regards the staffing of the company, recruitment is being carried out progressively in line with the approved organisational framework through public advertisements, screening, shortlisting, and interview under the supervision of the board.

Following a recruitment exercise, 28 Digital Health System Officers have been appointed, out of whom, only 19 are in post as at now. These officers are being deployed across hospitals and health regions.

Madam Speaker, the implementation of the e-Health System remains a high priority for Government. It represents a long-standing aspiration for the modernisation of our public health service, and through sustained efforts, we are now seeing real signs of progress.

The system is presently in its pilot and platform stabilisation phase, with close monitoring to address technical, operational, and user-related issues. Further work is ongoing to enhance reliability, streamline processes, and ensure a better experience for patients and healthcare personnel. Thank you.

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

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister confirm, regarding the Digital Health Agency which runs the e-Health Project, whether budget allocation has increased from 25 million to 45 million, and give the reason thereof? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: Well, I do not have in mind the exact sum which has been voted. But if the sum has been voted, it is because we have to recruit, and at the same time, we are trying to expand. In the beginning, it was in its initial stage, and that sum of money was not needed. In fact, we have returned Rs19 million back to the Consolidated Fund. We did not use the money.

But now, as and when the work is progressing, we have got plenty of work to do. For example, there are two regions where, practically, nothing was done by the previous government, and for that, money is required. I believe that being given it is governed by the Companies Act, it means they are completely independent. They take their own decisions. But, definitely, as far as matters of finance are concerned, it is my responsibility as a Minister to look into it. I can assure the House that each and every rupee will be utilised for the best of the system.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Put your question.

Ms Savabaddy: Thank you. A last one. Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the hon. Minister has tabled the list of directors, can he inform the House what the salaries of directors are? Has there been any increase for the next fiscal year? Can he give the details? Thank you.

Mr Bachoo: I do not have it in mind exactly, but, in fact, this was approved by the special committee, which is chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet. The decisions were taken. This is considered to be Grade A Company according to the company rule. Not an additional

single rupee additional will be paid to them. Whatever is prescribed by the Act, that much will be paid, that is, not much.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question.

Hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix!

VACOAS-PHOENIX PUBLIC GYMNASIUMS – FIRE CERTIFICATE & OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY COMPLIANCE

(No. B/984) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the public gymnasiums falling under the aegis of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) number and location thereof;

(b) total expenditure incurred for the maintenance of the premises and equipment thereof during the last financial year, and

(c) number thereof currently operating without a valid Fire Certificate or in breach of the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix that there are currently 20 public gymnasiums operating under its responsibility.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling the list of these gymnasiums, indicating their respective location and status of their fire certificates.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the total expenditure incurred by the municipal council for the maintenance of the gymnasium premises and equipment during the financial year 2025-2026 amounted to Rs 272,534. This expenditure relates to routine maintenance and minor repair works, including painting, lighting, plumbing, electrical works and other necessary upkeep to ensure that these facilities remain safe, functional and accessible to the public.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that at the time of the parliamentary question was submitted, the fire certificates for four gymnasiums, namely Holyrood Municipal Complex, Carreau Laliane Municipal Complex, Palmerston Omnisport Complex and Bonne Terre Municipal Complex had expired.

I am further informed that the municipal council had already initiated the renewal process through the National Electronic Licensing System, that is, the NELS. Following inspection carried out by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS), only minor additional fire safety improvements were recommended prior to the renewal of the fire certificates. On the recommendation of the MFRS, the four gymnasiums were permitted to continue operating, pending the completion of these minor improvement works and the renewal of their fire certificate.

The municipal council acted promptly and completed all the required works within a few days. Upon completion of the works, the MFRS carried out follow-up inspection, confirmed that all its recommendation had been fully complied with and issued the necessary clearances. Subsequently, the new fire certificates, valid for a period of three years, were issued on 06 July 2026.

Accordingly, I wish to reassure the House that all the 20 public gymnasiums operating under the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix are now in possession of valid fire certificates. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, it was yesterday, if I understand. It came yesterday.

Mr Lobine: Yes, one supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Start with one. Start with one!

Mr Lobine: Only one.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Lobine: Yes. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a survey with regard to the equipment that you have in all these 20 gymnasiums? Most of the gymnasiums have equipment that are obsolete or broken despite they are still running without fire certificate. Do you have a survey for all the equipment that need to be repaired?

Mr Woochit: Following the survey that has been done, we have noted that we have only four that did not have fire certificates, and it was minor recommendation from the MFRS. So, everything has been done. All the 20 hold the fire certificates now.

Mr Lobine: I am asking for the equipment, the obsolete equipment.

Mr Woochit: So, I have to make a survey for this.

Madam Speaker: For the equipment.

Mr Woochit: Yes, of course. For the equipment, we can make a survey for it.

Madam Speaker: Good.

So, next question will be for the hon. First Member for Montagne Blanche and Grand River South East.

WORKFARE PROGRAMME FUND – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & ASSISTANCE

(No. B/985) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Workfare Programme Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the eligibility criteria to benefit thereunder and the form of assistance provided.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the Workfare Programme Fund is a social protection measure to provide immediate financial assistance to laid off workers by paying a transition unemployment benefit for up to 12 months.

Under Section 77 of the Workers' Rights Act, the main objects of the Workfare Program Fund are –

- to pay a transitional unemployment benefit to laid off workers;
- to pay remuneration due to a worker where an enterprise is considered to be insolvent or in case of force majeure;
- to pay the amount representing the balance of 20% of industrial injury benefit to which an injured worker is entitled, calculated in accordance with the Social Contribution and Social Benefits Act, and
- to pay the financing of such social plan for the benefit of workers as may be prescribed.

Under this provision, the Workers' Rights (Social Plan) (Income Support to Workers) Regulation 2024 was made for income support to employees who were deprived of their wages from April 2024 to February 2025 as a consequence of having difficulties in accessing their workplaces due to infrastructural works being carried out along B103 road in the region of Chamarel.

Moreover, Section 40 of the Workers' Rights Act, which applies to a worker earning up to Rs600,000 annually, provides that the Workfare Programme Fund shall hold an account known as the Wage Guarantee Fund Account. The purpose which is –

(i) to pay remuneration for not more than the last three months wages as indemnity in lieu of notice, and end of the year gratuity or bonus due to a worker up to an amount of Rs50,000 where an enterprise is considered insolvent or in the case of force majeure. This payment is refundable to the Workfare Program Fund upon realisation of assets of the enterprise.

(ii) the Wage Guarantee Fund Account is also used to provide for unpaid contribution to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund.

Madam Speaker, as far as the eligibility criteria is concerned, Section 84 of the Workers' Rights Act, which applies to all workers, irrespective of their salary, provides for the payment of Transition Unemployment Benefit where –

"(1) A worker shall be entitled to a transition unemployment benefit where –

(a) his agreement is terminated by an employer –

(i) for the reason specified in section 61(2);

(ii) in contravention of section 64(1), (1A), (2) or (6);

(iii) for any other reason, whether justified or not; and

(b) work has ceased for reasons of –

(i) force majeure;

(ii) death of the employer; or

(iii) a company removed from the register under the Companies Act;

(ba) where he proceeds on leave without pay pursuant to an order made by the Board under section 72A (5) and he has not taken any other employment during that period of leave without pay;

(c) no termination letter has been issued and the supervising officer is of the opinion that the complaint is bona fide;"

In addition, to be eligible for the payment of the Transition Unemployment Benefit –

(d) he has registered himself with the supervising officer within a period of 60 days following the termination of his employment;

(e) he has, registered himself with the supervising officer after the period specified in paragraph (d) and has shown cause, certified by a medical certificate, that –

(i) he was admitted to a hospital or other medical institution in Mauritius or abroad for treatment in connection with an illness or injury before the expiry of the specified period and he was discharged after the expiry of that period;

(ii) he has been granted sick leave for the purpose of convalescence after his discharge or was on sick leave immediately after his discharge; or

(iii) he was bedridden during the specified period."

Another criterion for eligibility –

"The worker must reckon at least 180 days continuous employment, and in case of a part-time worker, he must have performed more than 24 hours work in a week."

Public officers, person employed by a statutory body falling under the purview of any Ministry or by a local authority, migrant workers and non-citizen are not eligible for the payment of Transition Unemployment Benefits.

The amount of Transition Unemployment Benefit payable to worker is as follows –

(a) 90% of basic wages or salary for the first three months;

(b) 60% of the basic wage or salary from the fourth month to the sixth month, and

(c) 30% of basic wage or salary from the seventh month to the end of the 12th month.

However, the maximum wage for calculating the Transition Unemployment Benefit is Rs28,750.

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Section 84 (7) of the Workers' Rights Act, the Transition Unemployment Benefit shall cease as from the end of the month in which the worker either becomes gainfully employed on a full-time basis for a period of at least 30 consecutive days, or reaches retirement age, or declined for the second time an offer for a job or training which is in accordance with his profile and qualification.

Under Section 84 (8) of the Workers' Rights Act, a worker who becomes gainfully employed has the obligation to notify the supervising officer of my Ministry accordingly. Where a worker who has become or is in gainful employment fails to notify the supervising officer, he shall commit an offence if he continues to benefit from the transition unemployment benefit. After being gainfully employed, he should refund the transition

unemployment benefit received, failing which the failure to refund constitutes an offence under section 84 (8C) of the Workers' Rights Act.

Madam Speaker, in accordance with section 123 subsection 2 of the Workers' Rights Act, such offence shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs25,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Baboolall: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can the hon. Minister indicate how many applicants are currently awaiting disbursements of assistance under the welfare programme?

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I do not have the number of pending cases, but what I can table is for each of the year 2022, and for the period January 2026 to June 2026, the number of applications received, the number of applications disposed and the number of applications being processed at the level of the Ministry.

Madam Speaker: You will be able to provide...

Mr Uteem: I will provide the additional information as how many are pending.

Madam Speaker: Of course. Is that all right? Yes, next question.

Mr Baboolall: Yes, since we are concerned about unemployed people, is there any local recruitment requirement first, before an employer is allowed to apply for foreign worker permits?

Mr Uteem: Yes, Madam Speaker, as I said, one of the eligibility criteria for this payment of transition unemployment benefit is that the employee, the worker should not have refused twice a job offer which matches his qualification and experience. And therefore, every worker who benefit from this transition unemployment benefit has to register with the unemployment centre and he is offered, on a priority basis, any job available. This is now a requirement before any employer recruits a foreign worker, he needs to go through the employment information centre. He needs to give a first offer to unemployed people including people receiving that transition unemployment benefit

Madam Speaker: Yes. Good.

Hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue.

FORTIFIED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT NATIONAL PROGRAMME – EXTENDED PROGRAMME TUTORS – PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/986) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Extended Programme Tutors under the Fortified Learning Environment National Programme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof whose five-year contracts are due to expire and whether consideration will be given for the provision of permanent employment or for the sustainable integration thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Subron: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the National Social Inclusion Foundation (NSIF) that the Fortified Learning Environment (FLE) National Programme was introduced in the year 2020. The Extended Programme Tutors is one segment of the Fortified Learning Environment (FLE) Programme, and its aim is to provide educational, psychosocial and family support to secondary school students experiencing learning difficulties and roll on the former Extended Programme (EP), now known as the Foundation Programme for Literacy, Numeracy and Skills (FPLNS).

Madam Speaker, I am also informed by the NSIF that there are 166 staff in Mauritius, and 21 in Rodrigues, who have been recruited under the FLE programme on contract basis at various point in time in the year 2023 and year 2024 for a duration of five years. Under the specific Extended Programme Tutors, there are presently 50 staff. The contract of 38 of the staff will terminate in 2028 and 13 of the staff's contract of five years will terminate in 2029. Therefore, in view of what I have just highlighted, no contract is due to expire soon. This would be my reply to the first question, Madam Speaker.

In regard to the second part of the question, the whole role of NSIF in regards to Fortified Learning Environment (FLE) Programme is being reassessed. Should the NSIF, which is the NGO funding agency arm of the State, be itself the provider of social programme such as FLE? This is the question under discussion right now. Should it not be the Ministry of Education or another institution such as the National Empowerment Foundation? This is also on the under discussion.

In any case, any change in policy will be discussed with all stakeholders, including the NSIF, FLE employees to ensure continuity of their employment and long-term programme effectiveness.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, one question.

Ms Savabaddy : Merci, Madame la présidente, j'ai bien compris la réponse du ministre qui est très claire. Néanmoins, j'aurais voulu poser une question, est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait-il confirmer à la Chambre combien d'employés sont concernés par l'arrivée à terme de ces contrats ?

Le gouvernement ou la NCIF envisage-t-il d'offrir à ces employés un emploi permanent ou toute forme d'intégration durable au sein de la fonction publique, d'un organisme paraétatique ou de la NSIF compte tenu de leurs 5 années de service continu ? Merci.

Mr Subron: As I have just stated, Madam Speaker, there are 166 staff in Mauritius and 21 staff in Rodrigues. For the specific programme in the question of the hon. Member, there are 50 staff in the Extended Programme Tutors and no contract is being expired now. They will expire in 2028 and 2029. So, there is no issue on termination of contract now. Then we will have to discuss if there are kind of redeployment in any other institution. This will be discussed with the preservation on their acquired rights. You can rest on me. I am an ex-trade unionist.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil.

ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN JUNCTION & RICHE FOND – B24 ROAD – FLOOD MITIGATION MEASURES

(No. B/987) Mr R. Beechook (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of flood mitigation measures along the B24 Road between the St Julien d'Hotman Junction and Riche Fond, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the junction of B24, Higginson Road and B111, Unité Branch Road has been identified by the Land Drainage Authority as a high-risk flood-prone area due to its low-lying topography and the convergence of significant upstream overland flows, resulting in recurrent flooding, debris accumulation and disruptions to road users during heavy rainfall.

Following detailed technical assessments, the LDA developed a comprehensive flood mitigation concept for the area, which was subsequently entrusted to the Drain Infrastructure

Construction Limited on 16 September 2024 for implementation. The proposal provides for holistic solution comprising a retention basin, major culverts and a system of swales designed to attenuate and safely convey storm water up to the final discharge point, that is, Rivière du Poste de Flacq. The estimated cost of the overall solution is approximately Rs177 million excluding VAT.

Madam Speaker, following consultations within my Ministry and the LDA, it was agreed to proceed in phases, prioritising immediate risk reduction works. Thereafter, following further consultations with the LDA, the Road Development Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, the project design was refined to incorporate traffic safety improvements alongside flood mitigation, including the introduction of a roundabout at the junction.

The first phase of the project will focus on critical interventions at the junction, namely the raising, realignment and reprofiling of the B24, B111 junction, the construction of reinforced concrete culverts to improve hydraulic conveyance, and associated drainage, and road safety works, including a three-legged roundabout, earth drains and riprap protection.

Madam Speaker, financial clearance of Rs49.42 million was sought and obtained from the Ministry of Finance for works, together with an additional sum of Rs3.81 million for consultancy services and land surveying. The procurement process has been completed. The Bid Evaluation Committee has recommended award to Transway Construction Company Ltd for an amount of approximately Rs49.42 million exclusives of VAT. Award has been made on 06 July 2026. Works are scheduled to start on 15 August 2026 with a contract duration of 364 calendar days. Works are expected to be completed by 15 August 2027.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to inform the House that in addition to the works to be undertaken by DICL, the earth rail component forming part of the continuous drainage channel, that is, from the new RC culvert at the road junction up to the final discharge point, will be implemented on a cost sharing basis, separately by Alteo Ltd, over a stretch of 475 meters following technical coordination with DICL and the LDA.

The detailed engineering drawings and specifications regarding the earth rail have already been transmitted to Alteo Ltd. This component is intended to commence in coordination with the phase one works to ensure hydraulic continuity of the system up to the discharge point.

Madam Speaker, as regards the remaining components of the overall flood mitigation solution, including the retention basin and additional upstream attenuation measures, these will be undertaken in subsequent phases while closely monitoring the effectiveness of phase one in the first instance.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Beechook, you are alright? Thank you. Now, I think it is hon. Second Member for Grand' Baie and Poudre d'Or!

GOODLANDS – FORMER TRAFFIC CENTRE – SPORTS COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT

(No. B/989) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the premises on which stood the former Traffic Centre at Goodlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the development of a secure sports complex comprising indoor and outdoor sporting facilities thereat to benefit the youth and residents of the region.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, I am informed that there is currently no proposed project for the development of a sports complex on the site of the former traffic centre at Goodlands.

The land, which is State land vested in the District Council of Riviere du Rempart, covers an area of approximately 5,500 square meters. While the region already benefits from several outdoor sporting facilities, there is currently no dedicated indoor sports complex within the jurisdiction of the District Council.

Madam Speaker, the development of an indoor and outdoor sports complex is a major capital investment. Such a project requires proper planning, technical studies, detailed design and adequate financial resources. It must therefore be identified as a priority by the District Council and included in its capital investment program and budget estimates before Government funding can be considered.

In this regard, hon. Members were invited to submit priority capital projects for their respective constituencies under the Government of India grant with funding up to Rs23 million per constituency. This provided an opportunity for the proposed sports complex to be

considered in consultation with the District Council. Similarly, during the annual budget preparation exercise, all local authorities were invited to submit their priority capital projects together with the necessary cost estimate for consideration by my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance.

The hon. Member could also have discussed this proposal with the Chairperson and members of the District Council so that the project could be considered among the council's development priorities. Likewise, my Ministry remains open to receiving proposals from the local authorities for projects of this nature.

However, I am informed that no such proposal or request was submitted during the recent budget preparation exercise. Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that successful local government projects are best achieved through close cooperation between the elected member and the local authority with my Ministry.

Parliamentary Questions play an important role in ensuring accountability but development projects are generally more effective when they are supported by proper consultation, planning and prioritisation before funding is sought. Nevertheless, recognising the importance of providing better sporting opportunities for the youth and resident of the region, I have requested the District Council of Rivière du Rempart to carry out a needs assessment for the proposed indoor sports complex. If the assessment confirms the need and if the District Council decides to proceed with the project, it may be considered during the next budget preparation exercise, subject to the submission of the necessary technical studies and cost estimate under a design and build procurement approach and the availability of funds and all requirement approvals.

My Ministry remains fully committed to working closely with the District Council and all stakeholders to support projects that promote community development, encourage youth participation in sports and improve the quality of life of our citizens. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr Beejan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Minister aware that the former traffic centre at Goodlands has become a place where residents have repeatedly reported

illicit activities despite the cleaning of the premises recently by Mauri Facilities and even by District Council of Rivière du Rempart? Can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the short-term planning to prevent this this type of situation?

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, as I said in my reply, this type of project requires proper planning, technical studies, detailed design and adequate financial resources. So, I already explained very well, very clearly, when we have the budget estimates, we have to come up with this sort of capital projects and then with the council to give it a priority. So now I got the request, maybe next time we can write prepare this capital project.

Madam Speaker: But the kind of question that you are putting hon. Member, maybe does not necessarily concern the hon. Minister because you are raising an issue of problems that are cropping up at that place, right? Maybe you can come up with a question for some other Ministry. Think about it. You wanted a second question? Okay. Good hon. Minister. All right.

Now we have the hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River.

BAMBOUS – NEW MARKET FAIR CONSTRUCTION – COMPLETION TIME FRAME

(No. B/990) Mr S. Jugurnauth (**Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new market fair at Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Black River, information as to –

(a) the expected timeframe for the completion thereof, and

(b) whether consideration will be given for the provision of adequate amenities thereat.

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, in my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/1218 of 09 December 2025 in respect of the same subject matter, I had informed the House that a plot of land to the extent of 6,831 m^2 , located at Bambous, was vested to the District Council of Black River in July 2024 for the construction of a market fair at Bambous.

The council had subsequently issued an expression of interest to appoint a professional architect to prepare the project brief along with the concept plan, employees' requirement and specification for the proposed new market fair. A preliminary report had been finalised in March 2025 and a quantity surveyor was to be appointed to prepare the preliminary cost estimate.

However, on 15 January 2026, the District Council of Black River requested my Ministry to seek the technical assistance of the Ministry of National Infrastructure to provide a technical team to supervise the design and implementation of the project to ensure that there is proper management of the project and to avoid any cost overrun.

Subsequently, my Ministry requested the MNI to examine the request for the Council and inform whether it is agreeable to provide technical assistance for the following –

(i) To review and validation of the project brief and cost estimate;

(ii) preparation of detailed design and tender documentation, and

(iii) supervision of works up to the completion of the project.

So, a reply is still awaited from the MNI. Madam Speaker, in this financial year, an amount of Rs1 million has been earmarked for the project so as to enable the technical team to prepare the drawings, cost estimate and bidding documents.

With regard to the project time frame, it is expected, subject to the agreement with the MNI, that the drawing and cost estimate would be ready by end of this year, following which financial clearance would be sought by my Ministry. Thus, upon receipt of the financial clearance, bids would be invited through the Central Procurement Board and the successful bidder would be allocated approximately 18 months to complete the construction of the new market fair at Bambous.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the District Council of Black River that the project will include amenities such as stall for vegetable section, meat, fish section, food court, toilet blocks. It would also accommodate a multi-purpose hall on the first floor. It is to be noted that consultation will be held with the hon.

Members of National Assembly and the and councillors for the implementation of the project and the hon. Member will have the opportunity to make proposals accordingly.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. You are okay, hon. Jugurnauth? Yes, hon. Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien!

ROUTE NO. 137, CARREAU ACACIA-CUREPIPE – BUS SERVICE COMPLAINTS

(No. B/991) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the bus service along Route No. 137, Carreau Acacia to Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to the –

(a) number of complaints received in respect thereof, indicating the reasons therefor, and

(b) measures being envisaged to ensure regular and reliable service for commuters thereat.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NLTA that six buses: two buses of the NTC and four individual buses are currently licensed to operate along Route No. 137 extending from Carreau Acacia to Curepipe.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that no formal written complaint has been registered with the NLTA in respect of bus services along that route. However, a few verbal representations were received during inspections carried out by the NLTA on 27 February and 02 March 2026. These representations relate mainly to irregularity of bus services and non-compliance with the approved timetable. It was also observed that two of the individual bus operators were not complying with the timetable, and additionally, the frequency of operation was not aligned with the demand for services.

Madam Speaker, the problem is a systemic one and can only be resolved with the help of technology. That is why I, myself, and officers of my Ministry have relentlessly worked on this problem which has been going on island wide for over two decades. Indeed, Government has been apprised during Cabinet Meeting of last Friday, that is, 03 July 2026, in the context of the progress of the implementation of the Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025-2029 on the achievement of my Ministry on the implementation of the fleet management system and

other technology related projects like the cashless ticketing, the online payment of fines and digital driving licenses, renewal of motor vehicle licenses and even a mobile app for parking system. Like I always say, digitalisation, *c'est le grand chantier de mon ministère*.

The bid evaluation exercise for the fleet management system has been completed. The successful bidder, a consortium led by State Informatics Limited, was notified on 05 June 2026 with a formal letter. However, a challenge has, unfortunately, been lodged with the Independent Review Panel by an unsuccessful bidder, which is the legitimate right of any bidder.

We hope this issue will be sorted out expeditiously and that the system will be fully operational by next year as it seeks to bring monumental improvements to the bus service levels in terms of bus frequency and passenger information in the interest of 450,000 daily public commuters. While GPS technology is available since decades in many countries, it is only now that Mauritius will finally introduce this technology in the entire bus fleet.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a revised timetable was introduced on a trial basis, taking into consideration the new demand patterns in the region, following the closure of the sugar factory at Mon Désert Mon Trésor, which entailed the relocation of several inhabitants to the new VRS Morcellement. The revised timetable is in place since 27 April 2026 and is still prevalent. The bus operation along the route will continue to be monitored, and adjustment will be made to the frequency of the bus services to better respond to the travel needs of the public.

To end, Madam Speaker, I am informed that subsidy deductions have been effected for days where services have not been provided for by any operator and that an inquiry is also currently underway for disciplinary actions to be initiated against those operators not abiding by the requirements of their timetable. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Apollon is happy.

It seems to me that some Members are feeling very hot. But I am not. Mind you, when I get very cold, you do not know. So, maybe somebody will tell the technicians to do something about it. It is not equal everywhere.

(Interruptions)

Ça va toi? *Froid*? *Chaud*?

Ms J. Bérenger: Ceux qui ont chaud peuvent enlever leurs vestes. Ceux qui ont froid ne peuvent pas se chauffer plus!

Madam Speaker: *Allez chut*!

We will do what we can, okay? Try and make it. *Moi, je n'ai pas chaud*.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn...

(Interruptions)

Members! Hon. Minister!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister, I am trying to speak.

The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/992, B/993 and B/1008.

TRIANON UNDERPASS – CCTV SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS & PANIC BUTTONS INSTALLATION

(No. B/992) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Trianon underpass, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Metro Express Ltd., information as to whether consideration will be given for the installation of CCTV surveillance cameras and panic buttons thereat, with a view to ensuring the safety and security of the users thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SOUILLAC CEMETERY – SOIL EROSION

(No. B/993) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Souillac Cemetery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether he has been made aware of the soil erosion problem occurring thereat and, if so, indicate the –

(a) remedial measures being envisaged, and

(b) source of funding therefor.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Now, we will proceed. We have some more time.

We will, therefore, call the hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue again! B/994!

LATE MR J. N. T. – ALLEGED INCIDENT – CORPSE HANDING OVER

(No. B/994) Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to late Mr J. N. T., he will state whether he is in presence of information regarding an alleged incident at the time of handing over the corpse thereof to the latter's family and, if so, indicate –

(a) whether an inquiry has been initiated thereinto, and

(b) the current protocol in place regarding the handing over of corpses to the families of deceased persons in hospital mortuaries.

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I wish first of all to convey my sincere condolences to the family of late Mr J. N. T. This is a very sad case. Out of respect for the deceased and for his family, I do not propose, at this stage, to delve into the painful circumstances of the deceased during his last days, nor into the circumstances which led to delays in the handing over of the body to the relatives. However, should supplementary questions specifically require that those details be made public, I will provide the relevant information to the House.

Madam Speaker, I wish to state clearly that on the information available to me, the delay in handing over the body to the relative did not arise from shortcomings on the part of the Ministry of Health and Wellness or from the hospital mortuary services. The circumstances involved identification and related administrative processes outside the ordinary situation where a body of a patient who dies in hospital is promptly claimed and handed over to the family.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the alleged incident at the time of handing over of the corpse, I am informed that there was a verbal complaint from the sister of the deceased regarding a problem of odour. I wish to place the technical facts before the House with clarity. Hospital mortuaries are designed primarily for the short-term storage of bodies of patients who pass away in hospitals and whose bodies are normally handed over to relatives within a relatively short period, generally within 24 hours to a few days and exceptionally up to around one week in ordinary circumstances.

In our hospital mortuaries, bodies are stored at temperatures of around 2 to 4 degrees Celsius. International guidance is consistent with this practice. Ordinary refrigerated mortuary storage is around 4 degrees Celsius while freezer storage for long-term storage is around minus 20 degrees Celsius.

It would, however, be scientifically incorrect and misleading to state that a body can be kept at 2 to 4 degrees Celsius for a fixed period without any risk of odour. Refrigeration slows decomposition. It does not stop decomposition. The appearance of odour depends on several factors, including the condition of the body at the time of death, the time elapsed before refrigeration, body habitus, infection, injuries, the presence of fluids, body bagging, handling conditions and the duration of storage. The important point is that ordinary positive temperature mortuary refrigeration at 2 to 4 degrees Celsius is for short-term storage.

International practice indicates that storage extending beyond about 21 to 30 days is no longer ordinary short-term mortuary storage. Authoritative guidance recommends that after about 30 days in refrigerated storage, a body should be moved to frozen storage if it is not soon to be released or further examined, and earlier if the condition of the body so requires. For prolonged storage, the appropriate facility is, therefore, not ordinary 2 to 4 degrees Celsius refrigeration. It is freezer storage with an operating temperature around minus 20 degrees Celsius and with appropriate sealed leak resistant body bags and regular condition checks. Even then, freezing very substantially reduces decomposition and odour. It does not provide an absolute guarantee that no odour will ever occur, particularly when a body is subsequently moved, handled, solved or released after prolonged storage.

In other words, Madam Speaker, the complaint regarding odour must be understood in its proper technical context. It is not evidence by itself of neglect by mortuary staff. It is a known consequence that may occur when a body is kept for a prolonged period in ordinary refrigerated mortuary conditions, which are not designed for long-term preservation.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that no separate departmental inquiry has been initiated by the Ministry, as there were no written complaints submitted to the Ministry, and the technical explanation for the verbal complaint was known. This does not prevent any competent authority from taking any action within its own remit, should new facts or a formal complaint be submitted. I am informed that the Police have already started an inquiry into the case, and the inquiry is still ongoing.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, there is a protocol in place regarding the handing over of corpses to the families of deceased persons in hospital mortuaries. The relatives willing to take the deceased for burial are required to produce their Identity Card and a death certificate. Thereafter, the corpse of the deceased is handed over to the relatives, along with the death certificate, specifying the cause of death, in three copies. The relatives of the deceased can then proceed to the Single Point Office or Civil Status Office to declare their death and apply for burial permit thereat in case of burial, or the Single Point Office or Civil Status Office and District Health Office to declare their death and apply for the cremation permit.

Madam Speaker, in the event the relatives are unwilling to take the deceased for burial, a written testimony is sought from the relative refusing to take the deceased corpse. Thereafter, the corpse is sent to the mortuary until further procedure by a Social Medical Worker and Health Office are completed for burial in accordance with established protocol.

Madam Speaker, there are around 100 corpses lying in the mortuary of our public hospitals. In reply to Parliamentary Question B/42 of 17 March 2026, I informed the House that a new mortuary chamber was being installed at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital. I am glad to inform that the equipment is being installed and is expected to become operational in the days to come.

Madam Speaker: Yes, your first question!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente. Ce qui s'est passé est très grave. L'honorable ministre peut-il informer la Chambre comment une telle erreur a pu se produire et s'il y a eu une enquête ou sanction administrative à ce sujet, et qui sont les responsables pour l’instant ? Merci.

Mr Bachoo: I had mentioned that this is such a delicate issue. I did not want to comment on that, but being given the question has been asked, I am duty bound to inform the House what has been the situation. There has been no case of negligence, Madam Speaker.

On 08 October 2025, the victim was conveyed to Victoria Hospital by an ambulance. He was admitted there on 08 October 2025. On 17 October, he passed away. No relative paid him any visit. Completely unknown, he passed away. The autopsy was carried out by the Police Medical Officer on the same day, and the body was transferred to the New Flacq

Hospital, also known as SAJ Hospital, because in Victoria Hospital, there was no place for corpses.

After investigation, the Police received information that this victim was a resident of Saint-Jean Abri de nuit. The Police was able to find out. Abri de nuit was requested to identify the body, and it was unable to confirm the identity in the beginning. Then, according to the Police Criminal Record Office, the prints were lifted from the deceased, and it was known as one Mr G.N.A.P.T.

According to information provided by the Police, Abri de nuit, after identification, agreed to assist the family for the funeral rights. The death was registered in the office at Rose Hill Civil Status for proposed burial at Trois Mamelles Cemetery. This information has been made available to me from Police records.

The burial could not be carried out because no family was identified, and then Abri de nuit refused to conduct the burial. The burial could not be carried out. So, in January 2026, the body was still laying in Flacq Hospital.

In January 2026, Abri de nuit contacted the Police to inform that one Mrs M.S.A.L. presented herself as the sister of G.N.A.P.T., and she had phoned to complain that her brother had been buried without her knowledge. That was in January. The date had not been mentioned.

In January, Abri de nuit contacted the Police to inform that one Mrs M.S.A.L. has presented herself as the sister, and had phoned to complain that her brother had been buried without her knowledge. The Police requested Abri de nuit to inform that lady to contact Rose Hill Police Station. That was in January. From January till 24 June, no news of that lady…

Madam Speaker: We are talking of this year?

Mr Bachoo: Of this year.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Bachoo: From January to June, no news. In January, she had appeared once through telephone. She was requested to contact the Police. According to police information, there was no contact.

Then on 24 June 2026, the sister contacted Abri de nuit once again, and she was informed that funeral had not been carried out. She was requested to contact the Police. The following day, I think she contacted the Police, and the Police informed her that the corpse of her brother was in the mortuary of Flacq Hospital. She phoned the Police on 24 June, the same day.

The following day she was accompanied by the Police to the mortuary of New Flacq Hospital for identification purpose. The Police was informed that the corpse had been transferred to the old Flacq Hospital, that is Bruno Cheong Hospital, as the mortuary at the New Flacq Hospital was undergoing servicing.

Then that lady identified the body of her brother by a tattoo mark on the chest. During the identification process, the lady made a verbal complaint that the body of her late brother has started to decompose.

Now, as I have already mentioned, refrigeration does not stop decomposition, it slows it. A body kept in a mortuary for a prolonged period may have putrefactive changes. Smell can result from volatile compounds produced during putrefaction. The body was handed on 27 June 2026, and burial permit was issued to her at Poudre d'Or Cemetery. That is the information which are made available to me by the Police.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question!

Ms Savabaddy: Merci, Madame la présidente. Dans cette histoire, il y a différents sons de cloche. Je ne suis pas convaincue par la réponse.

Madam Speaker: *Non, non, non, non*! Question, I have said!

Ms Savabaddy: Oui, maintenant, je pose ma question.

Madam Speaker: Non, non, non. Mais avant, vous n'avez pas posé votre question !

Ms Savabaddy: Mais, maintenant, je pose.

Madam Speaker: Vous avez fait des commentaires !

Ms Savabaddy: Ok. Comme tout le monde d'ailleurs ici.

Madam Speaker: C'est extrêmement délicat.

Ms Savabaddy: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre est-il au courant d'allégation de trafic de cadavres dans les hôpitaux, et que peut-il dire à ce sujet ? Merci.

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry, I do not have any news about it. You know, all the bodies – just imagine, Madam Speaker, we are not the guardian of bodies. The Police do not have any mortuary place to keep bodies. We have got almost one hundred bodies in our hospitals, and all these bodies are kept properly. As I told you, the more you delay in taking out the bodies, the more problems we do get.

Madam Speaker: We have got that.

Mr Bachoo: But there has never been any such case which has been reported so far, at least for the last one and a half year, since we are in power. So, that is why I would say, there has not been any such case.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Ms Savabaddy: One last.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Ms Savabaddy: *The Minister is saying that he is not the guardian of the bodies*. Mais, à l'hôpital de Brown Sequard, où j'ai été rendre visite l'année dernière, le personnel qui travaille…

Madam Speaker: Comment va-t-il répondre à cette question ?

Ms Savabaddy: Madame la présidente, il est en train de dire qu'il n'est pas le gardien des corps qui se retrouvent dans les morgues dans les hôpitaux. Je pose une question : comment est-ce que le personnel hospitalier, qui travaille à effectif réduit, peuvent surveiller les gens malades et en même temps surveiller les corps qui sont dans la morgue ?

Mr Bachoo: Madam Speaker, everybody knows what were the conditions of the country and of my Ministry when we took over. I do not deny the fact that we have got a lack of officers.

Madam Speaker: Minister, when you say, we are not the guardian of bodies, maybe you should be more specific because it gives an impression.

Mr Bachoo: I just want to say that this responsibility has been entrusted upon us, but we are looking after them. We are doing whatever is possible. I have just mentioned that one new mortuary is under completion, and that will also help us and enable us to keep additional bodies. But the question of keeping bodies for long, we have got bodies which are lying there for years, and that becomes a big burden for us.

At the same time, it is the responsibility of the Police. We have made a request to the Police, and I do hope they are looking into the possibility of getting away with those bodies, of course, according to the proper procedures.

Madam Speaker: Okay. We will come back one day on these issues – very important issue. It was very sad. Let us get back.

Now, I am calling on Dr. Aumeer!

RUISSEAU DU POUCE, TRANQUEBAR – RETAINING WALL CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/995) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed erection of a retaining wall along Ruisseau du Pouce at Cité Nazareth, in Tranquebar, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I am informed that my Ministry appointed VYYAASS Consulting Engineer Ltd, on 21 June 2018, to undertake the design and supervision of the proposed project 'Construction of flood protection works' along Ruisseau du Pouce at Cité Nazareth, Tranquebar. The consultant submitted the preliminary design report on 25 July 2018 and the detailed design report on 17 October 2018.

Prior to proceeding with implementation, the necessary wayleaves and clearances had to be sought from the relevant stakeholders. At that point in time, the authority of the Supreme Court also had to be sought to carry out work along rivers and canals. Exemption was provided only in the Finance Miscellaneous Provision Act 2021 in the year 2021.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry thereafter launched a procurement exercise on 25 March 2022. However, the bidding exercise was non-conclusive as prices quoted were significantly above the cost estimates. A second procurement exercise was again launched on 27 June 2022, which was also non-conclusive as bids were not technically responsive.

Madam Speaker, following a prioritisation exercise, the LDA, by way of a letter dated 01 June 2023, conveyed the implementation of the project to the DICL. The approved project value for the works component was Rs109 million inclusive of VAT based on cost estimates prepared in 2022. The scope of works comprised the construction of approximately 400 metres of masonry and gabion flood walls on both sides of Ruisseau du Pouce, concrete lining of the river bed of approximately 400 metres, desilting works of approximately 125 metres, and installation of handrails and other ancillary site works.

Accordingly, the DICL appointed Luxconsult Ltd to prepare the bidding documents and to supervise the implementation of the works. A first bidding exercise was initiated by DICL in December 2023 but the bids received were non-responsive. Another bidding exercise was launched by DICL on 17 April 2024. However, the lowest responsive bid exceeded the approved project value by more than 65%.

Madam Speaker, negotiations were subsequently held with the lowest responsive bidder on 02 September 2024, resulting in the reduction of the quoted price. Nevertheless, the negotiated bid still remained significantly above the revised engineer's estimate. The DICL therefore requested the Ministry of Finance to revise the approved project value from Rs109 million to Rs179.63 million inclusive of VAT.

Pending a decision on the request for financial clearance, a bid validity period was extended two times up to 30 June 2025. However, on 23 June 2025, the Ministry of Finance advised that the bidding exercise be cancelled. Consequently, the bidding exercise was cancelled and the project was put in abeyance as no additional funds were made available for the revised project value in the previous 2025-2026 Budget.

Madam Speaker, in addition, Luxconsult Ltd reported that successive heavy rainfall events, including the effects of Cyclone Belal, had significantly altered the site conditions and recommended that the original design concept of Yas Consulting Engineer Ltd dated 2018 be reviewed to incorporate enhanced flood protection measures.

Given that the scope of Lux Consult Limited appointment under the DICL contract did not include design services, while on the other hand, the National Development Unit of my Ministry already had an ongoing contract with Luxconsult Ltd to carry out a holistic study along Ruisseau du Pouce, the DICL requested the NDU to instruct the consultant to finalise and extract the design for Nazareth site and submit the completed design to DICL for implementation.

Madam Speaker, as the study currently being undertaken by the NDU's consultant along the entire Ruisseau du Pouce is still at the preliminary design stage, following the request from the DICL, the NDU requested its consultant on 29 May 2026 to carry out a cost-benefit analysis comparing the implementation of the proposed flood protection works against the relocation of the affected inhabitants and to identify feasible alternative solution.

The consultant has submitted a report on 02 July 2026 informing inter alia that –

(i) The estimated number of houses which are concerned with relocation is in the order of 125;

(ii) The cost of the initial scope of works at Cité Nazareth is now estimated at around Rs319 million, and

(iii) The reset preliminary design report recommends that the phasing out of work should rather start from the downstream and progressively advance upstream towards Nazareth to ensure that there is no worsening of existing flooding conditions and that the hydraulic benefits of each completed section can be effectively conveyed through the downstream drainage network.

Madam Speaker, given the complexity and sensitivity of the matter including the social, legal and financial aspect involved, my Ministry is currently examining the consultant's report to identify the best course of action. Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre will be requested to remain on standby at the location during periods of heavy rainfall.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Une réponse très technique, très complexe, très difficile à assimiler pour les gens qui souffrent tous les jours. J'apprécie, je dois poser une question. Puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre whether urgent consideration will be given to the construction by either DICL, Luxconsult Ltd, Yas Consulting Ltd, for the construction of a retaining wall even on a temporary basis adjacent to one to four houses where lives of people matter and could be lost in the next torrential rains that could affect our summer period, given that particularly one particular person, Mr. J.L., whose house has been completely eroded from below, before we

embark and it concerns all of us, on mega projects such as M4 or the Harbour Bridge? Thank you.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, I fully understand the concern of my good friend, the hon. Member, because myself, we met on a few occasions on the Nazareth. It is not so simple. At a point in time, we thought that there were only five or seven people that we have to relocate because it is quite a complex job that has to be done. But unfortunately, the consultant has provided a report. Now the relocation concerns 125 persons.

We were even thinking at a point in time, to dig a what we call a pond, a basin in that region, but that also according to the Consultant, will not work. So, we now have to robably with the hon. Member, I will give you a copy of the report, probably we study together with the hon. Members of the Constituency and we can find out because it is public money. We do not want to just put a wall and tomorrow you get the flooding and it does not work at all.

So, if the consultant, the engineers, the professionals have submitted a report, let us study the report and together we decide on the way forward.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Carry on.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you again, Madam Speaker. One very last question for my hon. friend and my two hon. friend Ministers sitting at his back who are also MLAs of my constituency. May I ask the hon. Minister if he could use his goodwill so that we can have a meeting on site with the residents and give them a decent, easy explanation of what is being done for them? Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Un langage qu'ils comprennent.

Mr Gunness: Obviously. But I will suggest to my honorable friend that first we meet the three hon. MPs of the constituency. I will hand over a copy of the report to you. You study it, we meet in the office, then we fix a date to go to meet the people. No objection at all.

Madam Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Hon. Second member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or.

ROCHE TERRE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/996) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Roche Terre Government

School, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the construction of pedestrian walkways with appropriate handrails in the vicinity thereof and, if so, indicate the proposed timeframe therefor.

Mr Gunness: Madam Speaker, the Roche Terre Government School is located in the vicinity of the Grand-Gaube Coastal Road B14. This road is approximately 6 metres wide and passes through a densely built-up area. I am informed by the Road Development Authority that pedestrian footpaths have already been constructed wherever feasible over a length of approximately 500 meters along the side of the school, that is, on the left-hand side when travelling towards Grand-Gaube from the Shri Ram Krishna Mandir to the Roche Terre Government School.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that along the existing pedestrian footpath, there are handrails over the majority part of it. I have asked the RDA to consider the possibility of fixing handrails along the remaining footpaths. I am also informed that there is no road reserve in this specific area. As such, it is not feasible to extend the footpath further towards Grand Gaube.

The available road corridor is constrained by ancillary structures, including extensions of buildings and other structures supported by boundary walls, which extend close to the edge of the road and limit the space available for the construction of additional pedestrian walkways. This situation makes it difficult to have recourse to land acquisition.

Madam Speaker, in view of these constraints, the RDA will carry out a joint site visit with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the Police by mid-July 2026 to identify appropriate road safety measures that may be implemented to enhance pedestrian safety in the area.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Yes, Hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal.

POTATO SEED QUALITY – CROP LOSSES – COMPENSATION

(**No. B/997) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal**) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries whether, in regard to potato seeds provided by the Agricultural Marketing Board to planters in 2025, he will table the report, if any, of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute in relation to

losses incurred as a result of the quality thereof, indicating the measures being envisaged in relation thereto and whether the planters will be compensated for losses incurred.

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Linn sove* ?

Madam Speaker: Qu'est-ce qui se passe ? The hon. Minister is not here?

(Interruptions)

It is all right. We will wait for you. *Il se fait desirer*. So, I call again, hon. First Member for Vacoas & Floréal.

Ms J. Bérenger: B/997.

Dr. Boolell: I convey my apologies to you, Madam Speaker, and to the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker: Accepted.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much.

Now, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute that as per figures available, the 2025 potato crop harvest was considered to have been satisfactory. The House may wish to note that in 2025, local potato production reached 50,040 tons from a total cultivated area of 682.4 hectares with an average yield of 22 tons per hectare compared to the 10-year average yield of 21.6 tons per hectare.

Over the last 10 years, 2014 to 2024, the average annual potato production stood at approximately 15,460 tons. These figures demonstrate that national potato production in 2025 remained broadly in line with historical performance, notwithstanding the occurrence of localised crop failure in certain regions during the second potato planting season 2025.

Ms J. Bérenger: Madam Speaker, …

Madam Speaker: Yes?

Ms J. Bérenger: Excuse me, but …

Madam Speaker: On n'entend pas. On n'entend pas.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je pense qu'on lui a donné...

Madam Speaker: Non, le ministre n'a pas fini !

Ms J. Bérenger: Oui, je sais. Mais je pense qu'on lui a donné la mauvaise réponse parce que, vous pouvez voir, ma question concerne précisément *les potato seeds provided by the AMB.*

Dr. Boolell: Yes, I am coming to it, *mademoiselle*!

Ms J. Bérenger: But he is talking about the potato production.

Dr. Boolell: Mademoiselle?

Ms J. Bérenger: It is not the same.

Madam Speaker: Let him finish. Then, you can come back.

Dr. Boolell: If I can advise the hon. Member to hold her horses. I am coming to it. There is no need to rush.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais si ! Le temps est limité. Le temps est limité !

Dr. Boolell: All right. All right.

Madam Speaker: No, you still have a bit of time. Come on. Try and be precise.

Dr. Boolell: Yes. Thank you very much.

Okay, I will come straight to it.

Now, I am informed that 73 potato planters were affected in specific regions. The extent of the damage varied from slight to severe depending on individual plantations. Overall, the production loss in the affected areas represented approximately 10% of national potato production.

I am further informed that FAREI with its extension service carried out extensive field visits to determine the causes of the crop failure, and provided appropriate technical advice to the affected potato planters. I am additionally informed that FAREI conducted 22 pest and disease surveys in the affected area regions as part of its technical assessment.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling a copy of the assessment report prepared by FAREI for the benefit of the House.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, by AMB that several corrective measures have already been implemented for the campaign 2026, namely –

1. The importation of elite seed potato instead of class A seed potatoes.

2. Sourcing seed potatoes exclusively from internationally recognised and reputable suppliers in France and in Netherlands.

3. Strengthening phytosanitary import controls to ensure higher quality seed potatoes.

4. Implementing a joint inspection mechanism involving the National Plant Protection Office and FAREI at both importation and field levels.

5. Appointing an independent international seed potato surveyor to inspect consignments at origin prior to shipment.

6. Requiring suppliers to carry out seed treatment before shipment.

7. Improving cold chain management to preserve seed quality throughout transportation, shortage and distribution.

8. Strengthening the traceability of seed potatoes from importation to plantation.

I can also inform the House that following necessary financial clearance obtained before the close of financial year 2025-2026, a comprehensive package of support has been put in place for the affected potato planters under campaign 2025 as well as potato planters for campaign 2026 so as to strengthen agricultural production during financial year 2026-2027. This comprises measures financed by my Ministry as well as additional financial assistance provided by AMB.

In this respect, my Ministry has identified savings of Rs14.5 million from its voted budget for financial year 2025-2026 to be deployed as financial assistance to top up the floor price payable to potato and onion planters under campaign 2025. This measure is being implemented through AMB.

Now, in order to ensure fair and adequate support to the potato planters for campaign 2025, AMB will, accordingly, proceed to top up by Rs7,000 per ton for grade 1 potatoes and by Rs3,000 s for mixed grade potatoes. Previously, in 2025, AMB paid an interim floor price for potatoes of Rs35,000 per ton for grade 1 potatoes and Rs33,000 per ton for mixed grade.

Madam Speaker, in addition, I am informed by AMB that as regards crop failure affecting potato planters under campaign 2025, 47 satisfied the eligibility criteria for the reimbursement of cost of seeds. These criteria required that the seed potatoes had been purchased directly from AMB and planted within 21 days of purchase.

Second, a further 17 planters did not initially qualify because they planted the seeds beyond the recommended 21-day period. Nevertheless, in view of the legitimate representations made and on humanitarian ground, I requested the AMB to develop an appropriate support package for those 17 affected potato planters. The remaining nine planters were not eligible because they had neither purchased their seeds from AMB and had planted them well outside the recommended planting season. To date, an amount of Rs3.13 million has already been disbursed by AMB for reimbursement for seed losses, while a further Rs174,000 is currently being processed by AMB.

Madam Speaker, together with MP from the constituencies of 13 and 16, I had a meeting on 06 July 2026 with affected potato planters of the campaign 2025 at the head of AMB's office during which I announced that a payment amounting to Rs85,000 per arpent will be provided directly by AMB to the 64 affected planters to assist them in meeting part of the production cost.

This gesture of goodwill will amount to approximately Rs13.7 million and will be financed directly by AMB on an exceptional one-off basis. It will constitute full and final payment in respect of this matter. This financial support provided by the AMB is in line with Government's objective of supporting local agricultural production.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by AMB that notwithstanding the prevailing limited fiscal space, a series of accompanying measures has been developed as summarised below –

(i) for campaign 2026, for all potato growers, Rs76,200 per arpent, that is the 75% subsidy on seed potato;

(ii) for campaign 2025, for all potato growers, with financial assistance to top up floor price payment, Rs56,000 per arpent for grade one potatoes and Rs24,000 per arpent for mixed grade potatoes;

(iii) for campaign 2025, for affected potato growers only, Rs25,400 per arpent, reimbursed by AMB on the cost of seed potatoes, and

(iv) of course, the cherry on the cake for campaign 2025, for affected growers only, Rs85,000 per arpent.

Madam Speaker, this therefore represents a fair, adequate and substantial package of Government support. It is intended not only to provide meaningful relief to the affected

planters, but also to restore confidence among potato planters, safeguard domestic potato production and further strengthen our national food security.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. L'honorable ministre considère comme *fair* la compensation proposée.

Madam Speaker: Question !

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais il est bien au courant que les planteurs qui ont assisté à la réunion hier ne sont pas du tout satisfaits. Donc, par rapport à la compensation proposée pour le coût de production de pommes de terre, est-ce que l'honorable ministre pourrait expliquer à la Chambre la méthode de calcul utilisée. Comment est-ce que son ministère est arrivé à proposer une compensation pour le coût de production de pommes de terre, une compensation de R 50,000 par arpent, puis de R 85,000 par arpent, alors que les planteurs et la FAREI, elle-même, estiment à plus de R 200,000 par arpent le coût de production de pommes de terre. Comment est-ce qu'il est arrivé à ce calcul et est-ce qu'il trouve cela vraiment *fair* à la lumière de ces chiffres ?

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, even the most beautiful person cannot give what she does not have or he does not have. Now, in the light of complaints registered by planters, as a responsible Government, we have levelled up to our responsibility and to meet the needs of planters to a large extent.

In relation as to how it was calculated, it was calculated by the best of human resources who are in daily touch with the planters. You know, I know planters as much as probably you do not know, right? But I can tell you, they are very emotional.

Ms J. Bérenger: … la même arrogance !

Madam Speaker: *Chut!* Let him answer!

Dr. Boolell: Hold on a minute, please! Hold on your horses.

They are emotional but they will come to better terms and we have had good interactive meetings. All our friends from the different constituencies were relatively happy in relation to what we have offered. Of course, if we can make a better disbursement, so much it will be done.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Ms J. Bérenger: Une question s'il vous plait.

Madam Speaker: Oui.

Ms J. Bérenger: Pourrait-il éclairer la Chambre ? D'abord, permettez-moi de regretter à chaque fois cette même arrogance. La dernière fois quand j'ai abordé ce sujet-là, c'était la même chose. Ce n'est pas pour moi que je parle, je parle pour les planteurs. Je ne suis pas là pour m'amuser.

Pourrait-il éclairer la Chambre sur la quantité de semence défectueuse qui sont concernées ? Quel est le montant total des pertes encourues par l'AMB ? Et est-ce que ce montant a été réclamé au fournisseur des semences défectueuses comme le ministre lui-même l'a envisagé sur sa page Facebook ?

Dr. Boolell: Yes. Certainly, to some extent it can be done, okay? But it will not get the total loss. Now, I will impress upon the hon. Member that all the hon. Members from different constituencies are in touch with the members of the planting community. Being in touch with members of the planting community is not the privilege of one or of a few. It is the privilege of one and all and we are doing our level best to respond to the needs of planters.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Répondez à la question* !

Madam Speaker: That is enough. That is it! Hon…

Ms J. Bérenger: *Il ne répond pas,* Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On ne peut pas l'obliger s'il ne veut pas répondre. Ça va être dans le public, c'est tout.

Ms J. Bérenger: D'accord, je peux avoir une dernière question ?

Madam Speaker: Je ne peux pas l'obliger à dire plus que ça. Allez, dernière question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Je regrette quand même qu'on n'ait pas eu de montant ni de chiffre. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut confirmer qu'il existe depuis 2023 un rapport de la FAREI qui avait déjà signifié les mauvaises conditions de stockage des semences et pourquoi rien n'a été fait jusqu'ici suite à la publication de ce rapport ?

Dr. Boolell: If the hon. Lady had paid heed to what I stated, this is an issue which is being addressed in a very forceful and meaningful manner by Agricultural Marketing Board. I would advise you to read carefully all the measures which are being dispensed to members of the planting community.

Ms J. Bérenger: C'est arrivé de nouveau !

Madam Speaker: Ça suffit! Hon. Member, please.

Mr Gunness: *2023 sa rapor la.*

Ms J. Bérenger: Rien n'a…

Madam Speaker: Let me proceed! We have got perhaps one more question to go. Okay. Hon. Second Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, please.

RAINWATER HARVESTING GRANT SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES – EXTENSION

(No. B/998) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Rainwater Harvesting Grant Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the number of beneficiaries thereunder since March 2025 to date, and

(b) whether consideration will be given for the extension thereof to commercial building owners.

Mr Assirvaden: Madame la présidente, je suis informé que la banque de Développement de Maurice (DBM) administre depuis juillet 2024 le programme de subvention destiné à encourager l'installation des systèmes de récupération des eaux de pluie. Dans ce cadre, les ménages dont les revenus mensuels étaient inférieurs à R 60,000 peuvent bénéficier d'une aide financière de R 10,000 pour l'acquisition d'un tel système.

Madame la présidente, s'agissant de la partie (a) de la question, je suis informé que depuis mars 2025 à ce jour, la DBM a reçu 407 demandes dont 188 ont déjà bénéficié de cette subvention. Conscient de l'importance de renforcer la résilience hydrique des ménages face aux défis liés au changement climatique, le gouvernement, mon ministère a prévu une enveloppe de R 30 millions dans le budget 2026-2027 afin d'assurer la poursuite de ce programme.

Les demandes éligibles qui n'avaient pu être traitées lors du précédent exercice financier seront ainsi examinées. La poursuite du programme demeurera toutefois tributaire de la disponibilité des ressources financières.

Madame la présidente, en réponse à la partie (b) de la question, je tiens à souligner que ce programme vise avant tout à permettre aux ménages à faible revenus d'améliorer leur sécurité d'approvisionnement en eau grâce à un soutien concret de l'État.

J'ajouterais que le gouvernement a également renforcé son soutien en accordant une subvention de R 15,000 aux ménages éligibles dont le revenu mensuel est inférieur à R 60,000 pour l'acquisition d'une citerne et d'une pompe à eau. Cette mesure vient compléter notre stratégie visant à promouvoir une meilleure gestion des ressources en eau et à renforcer la capacité des familles mauriciennes à faire face aux périodes de sécheresse.

Madame la présidente, à ce stade, il n'est pas envisagé d'étendre ce programme aux bâtiments commerciaux. Je n'y crois pas vraiment, personnellement. Toutefois, le gouvernement encourage vivement les propriétaires des bâtiments commerciaux à investir dans leur propre système de récupération des eaux de pluie pour les usages non potables. Une telle démarche s'inscrit pleinement dans notre vision d'une gestion plus responsable, durable et efficiente de cette ressource précieuse qu'est l'eau.

Madam Speaker: Yes, okay. Well, I can have another question. Yes, lucky.

PIG BREEDING INDUSTRY – SAINT MARTIN BREEDERS CHALLENGES

(No. B/999) 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 the pig breeding industry, he will state Government vision therefor, indicating whether he has taken cognizance of the current challenges faced by the breeders of Saint Martin and the measures being envisaged to address same.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. I thank the hon. First Member Port Louis North and Montagne Longue who put this question.

Madam Speaker, Government policy regarding pig breeding industry is to have a modernised, resilient and sustainable pig breeding sector that prioritises strict biosecurity, public health and environmental protection and management. Although pig breeding contributes to food security and income generation. The sector faces structural, sanitary, environmental and economic challenges as well as regulatory issues that threaten its long-term viability. Pig breeding at Saint Martin comprises of two phases.

At the phase one, approximately 4.22 hectares of State land are leased since 1986 by the Ministry of Housing and Lands to the Mauritius Pig Marketing Cooperative Federation,

and around 43 breeders currently operate on the site with an estimated pig population of 3,790 heads.

As regards phase two, it accommodates approximately 10,905 pigs for 152 farmers. In fact, the site was initially designed for 88 pig houses, each with a capacity of 75 to 100 pigs over 25 arpents of State land, for which the EIA license was granted. However, during the past few years, operations have expanded beyond the scope of the EIA to cover 205 plots within 25 arpents to cater for additional pig breeding activities.

Madam Speaker, waste management remains the most pressing issue in pig breeding, particularly at St Martin phase two, where there is no pig waste treatment facility and drainage system for pig waste. Breeders dispose of pig waste on site through pits that often overflow. With a view to addressing the challenges being faced in the pig breeding sector, an Inter-Ministerial Committee has been set up on 20th February 2026, chaired by hon. Shakeel Mohamed, comprising my Ministry, Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and two meetings have been held on 05 March and 04 June 2026.

Madam Speaker, in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/893 on 02 June 2026, I stated that an Expression of Interest for the collection of pig waste and its transformation into energy was launched by my Ministry, wherein two companies showed interest. One of them proposed that treatment of pig waste could be undertaken in-house at its water treatment plant. After evaluation of the two proposals, the Ministry is currently working on the scope of works for the launching of an open advertised bidding. Hon. Fabrice David, Junior Minister of the Ministry, has been delegated to chair a Technical Committee on the conversion of pig waste to energy and a first committee was held on 23 March 2026. A site visit was held on 01 July 2026 at the *Energie des Mascareignes,* regarding its waste to energy conversion plant, and a further meeting was held on 02 July 2026 to discuss the feasibility of the project.

In addition, at the Inter-Ministerial Committee, it was agreed that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would amend the Public Health Act to regulate the use of swill feed for the upgrading of the quality of meat, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. It was also agreed that the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change would work on amendments to the Environment Act 2024, regarding number of pigs required for preliminary environment application.

Madam Speaker, for Financial Year 2026-2027, Rs10 million have been provided to cater for cleaning of the waste treatment system at St Martin phase two, and cleaning and rehabilitation of storm water drain at St Martin phase two. In addition, a task force has been set by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries to address *inter alia* –

(i) advise on the development of sustainable pig breeding sector;

(ii) develop a comprehensive policy on pig waste management, and

(iii) formulate a policy on pig feed.

In addition, I effected a site visit on Wednesday 01 July 2026, in the presence of officers of the Ministry and the pig breeders to take stock of the current situation thereat, wherein pig breeders were invited to collaborate with the authorities in order to address the various issues. A meeting will be held in two weeks' time with the breeders to follow up on the developments in relation to this specific matter.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius being a service-based economy, where tourism plays a significant role, it is important that there is a proper management of pig waste to prevent environmental degradation and river pollution, and address bio-safe security concern. Therefore, the Division of Veterinary Services has been requested to work out the optimum number of pigs that is required for the population. Thereafter, the number of pig breeders will be limited accordingly and they may be requested to diversify into other breeding activities. Furthermore, application for new permits is not being granted for pig breeding for the time being. And as from tomorrow, there will be a team going to go on *opération nettoyage* in St Martin.

Madam Speaker: Very good. This is the last question.

Ms Savabaddy: Only one or two?

Madam Speaker: Put your first one. Let us see.

Ms Savabaddy: Okay.

Madam Speaker: Put your question!

Ms Savabaddy: Okay. L'honorable ministre peut-il dire qu'avec 1.4 million de touristes par an, l'industrie porcine mérite de meilleures considérations et qu'il faut une assise sur l'avenir de ce secteur à Maurice ?

Madam Speaker: Il vient de répondre!

Dr. Boolell: I totally subscribe to what the hon. Lady has said.

In fact, I would invite inputs from her and within the next two weeks, the hon. DPM will also attend that meeting. We will have a good interactive session with our friends from the pig breeding community and you are most welcomed to join us.

Madam Speaker: Okay, we will end here. We are already late.

Now, the Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/1002, B/1003, B/1004, B/1005, B/1007, B/1011, B/1013, B/1015 and B/1016.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy 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 rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

RIVIÈRE DU REMPART MARKET PROJECT – CONTRACT AWARD

(4.17 p.m.)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister! Not too long if you can.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Woochit): It is very comprehensive, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Do your best!

Mr Woochit: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I wish to make a Statement with respect to the Rivière du Rempart Market project. The House will recall that on 24 March 2026, I had provided a comprehensive reply to Parliamentary Question B/136 from the hon. Dr. Prayag on the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker, the Rivière du Rempart Market project was awarded to Alphamix Limited in February 2003, at the cost of Rs51,049,711 inclusive of VAT for its implementation in three phases as follows –

- Phase one, construction of market at ground floor at the cost of Rs21,665,046;
- Phase two, extension works at ground floor at the cost of Rs7,813,046, and
- Phase three, construction of first floor at the cost of Rs21,571,182.

Following recommendation to award the contract by the then Central Tender Board. As at 27 September 2006, the Council has disbursed Rs36,997,116 to the contractor while retaining Rs14,052,595 in respect of unresolved contractual issues, including outstanding defects, uncertified extensions of time, disputed claims and liquidated damages.

In 2008, the contractor instituted proceedings before the Supreme Court, claiming Rs183,848,589 on the ground that payments due under the contract had not been fully settled. The matter was subsequently referred to arbitration. On 13 May 2009, the Supreme Court, in consultation with both parties, appointed an arbitrator, namely Me D. H. Vellien to adjudicate and resolve the dispute.

The latter made the following awards, which were eventually paid by the Council –

(i) on 26 January 2012, an amount of Rs2,026,065, representing retention money due, less 10% for snag list.

(ii) on 07 June 2012, an amount of Rs303,909, representing 15% VAT on the retention sum of Rs2,026,065, and

(iii) on 19 July 2013, an amount of Rs8,022,380 plus interest accrued as from year 2005.

Madam Speaker, on 10 February 2014, following an anonymous letter addressed to the then Independent Commission Against Corruption pertaining to allegation against both the Arbitrator and the Council of Alphamix Ltd, the Arbitrator withdrew himself from the arbitration. Subsequently, on 18 March 2015, the Supreme Court appointed Justice Marie Benjamin Joseph as Arbitrator. The latter made the following awards, which were paid by the Council –

(i) on 29 August 2015, an amount of Rs3,536,250, representing the refund of the adjudicated and ascertained damage inclusive of VAT, and

(ii) on 30 July 2016, an amount of Rs11,181,928, representing compound interest at the rate of 15.33% accrued on the sum of Rs3,536,250 due from 22 September 2005 to 04 September 2015.

On 23 September 2016, the Arbitrator granted an interim award of Rs72,921,570 plus VAT for full and final settlement of the capital claim.

On 05 May 2018, an amount of Rs83,859,805 was released by the then Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, and the only live issue was the payment of interest.

Madam Speaker, on 31 December 2018, the Arbitrator made an award for the payment of the amount of Rs438,634, representing interest at the rate of 15.33% per annum, compounded daily on the capital amount of Rs72,921,570 over the period of 10 October 2005 to 03 May 2018, amounting to Rs427,444,630, and simple interest accruing on the amount of Rs427,324,630 at the legal rate of 3.5% per annum over the period starting from 04 May 2018 until the date of payment.

In January 2019, the District Council of Rivière du Rempart made an appeal against the award of the Arbitrator. However, in January 2022, the Supreme Court declared the award of 31 December 2018 null and void, as the award made by the Arbitrator in the arbitration proceeding involving the applicant and the respondent contravenes Article 1026, subsection 5 of the *Code de Procédure Civile*, which stipulates that an arbitration award must contain specific details such as the names of the arbitrators and the exact date of the award.

Failure to meet these mandatory specifications renders the award null and void. The Supreme Court further stated that the Section 1027 (3) part 3 of the *Code de Procédure Civile*, which makes provision for the circumstances where the award is not within the mandate conferred upon the Arbitrator by the parties, has not been respected.

Madam Speaker, consequently, the contractor successfully appealed before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. On 05 June 2023, the Privy Council held that the arbitral award remained valid and enforceable. Following legal advice from the Attorney General's Office and the legal advisors of the District Council, the then Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development provided the necessary funding to enable payment of the

judgment debt. Subsequently, the total amount of Rs580,384,862 was ultimately paid to the contractor, including Rs30,208,515 in terms of legal fees.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that this matter attracted adverse report in its report for the financial year 2022-2023. In view of the gravity of this matter, and in keeping with this Government's unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability, my Ministry has decided to set up a fact-finding committee with the following terms of reference –

(i) establish the circumstances that led to this extraordinary financial liability;

(ii) identify any administrative, contractual or procedural shortcomings;

(iii) responsibility wherever appropriate, and

(iv) make recommendation to strengthen governance in the implementation and management of public contracts,

(v) the fact-finding committee be chaired by a retired judge and comprise representatives from the Ministry of National Infrastructure, a former Chief Executive and an independent engineer.

Madam Speaker, this Government owes it to the Mauritian people to establish the full facts. Every rupee of public money must be accounted for and every lesson must be learned to ensure that such a costly episode is never repeated.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Mauritius Hydrographic Services Bill (No. XI of 2026) was read a first time.

Madam Speaker: Members, I think we can take a break now before we start on the Second Reading.

Okay, I suspend the Sitting for half an hour.

At 4.28 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.11 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, please be seated.

Second Reading

THE DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL

(No. VIII of 2026)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Domestic Abuse Bill (No. VIII of 2026)

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer, the floor is yours.

(5.11 p.m.)

Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) : Merci, Madame la présidente. Merci de me donner l'occasion de partager mes opinions sur ce projet de loi qui intervient à un moment très crucial, je dirais même opportun, dans le contexte des récents cas de fémicide qu'on a eu dans ce pays depuis l'année dernière, particulièrement depuis janvier de cette année.

Et je dois dire que malgré que le terme ‘fémicide’ ne figure pas dans le projet de loi, le terme fémicide a déjà fait jurisprudence à l'île Maurice. Notre propre jurisprudence a déjà commencé à nommer le mal par son nom. Dans l'affaire de l'État contre Nubbeebuccus Mamode Umaiir, la Cour Suprême a expressément qualifié le meurtre d'une jeune femme de « *horrifying case of femicide* ».

Et donc, Madame la présidente, j'exhorte l’honorable leader de l'opposition à se concentrer sur le fond de ce projet de loi que sur toute la forme, car à ne se pas limiter à l'omission présumée d'un seul mot.

Madame la présidente, je dois dire en écoutant le discours de l'honorable leader de l'opposition, et que j'ai relu.

Ms Anquetil: Il arrive, il arrive !

An hon. Member: On prend son nom et il arrive.

Madam Speaker: Bienvenue !

Dr. Aumeer: Je dois reconnaître une chose à nos collègues de l'opposition, leur capacité d'analyse s'est considérablement améliorée depuis qu'ils ont quitté le pouvoir. Et c'est fascinant ! Pendant 10 ans les problèmes existaient, les défis évoluaient et le monde changeait. Pourtant, aucune réforme digne de ces nouveaux enjeux n'a vu le jour.

Madame la présidente, après 26 ans depuis la promulgation de la loi *Domestic Violence Act* de 1997, l'île Maurice est maintenant prête à relever les défis et de nouvelles formes de violence qui se font apparaître, et qu'il va falloir faire des amendements en termes de violence domestique physique, en terme psychologique, économique et le cyberharcèlement.

Madame la présidente, je dois féliciter l'honorable Première ministre adjointe pour venir de l'avant avec un projet de loi si attendu d'une part, pour toutes celles qui souffrent dans la douleur et dans l'obscurité, mais aussi d'autre part, pour ceux qui ont perdu leurs chères sœurs, leurs chères mères, aux frères ou même aux familles qui ont perdu des proches. On ne pourra jamais leur retourner leurs chères sœurs, filles et mamans. Mais ce gouvernement, avec le projet de loi que l'honorable Première ministre adjointe a présenté, sera rappelé pour avoir protégé davantage les femmes, les filles, les personnes âgées, les vulnérables.

Madame la présidente, c'est précisément dans cet esprit que s'inscrit l'action d'un gouvernement qui a véritablement à cœur la protection des femmes et des enfants. Car la grandeur d'un gouvernement ne se mesure pas uniquement à ses réalisations économiques ou à ses infrastructures, mais aussi, et surtout, à sa capacité de protéger les plus vulnérables, de défendre ceux qui souffrent en silence et de faire de chaque foyer un lieu de sécurité et non de peur.

Madame la présidente, je veux maintenant m'attarder sur deux points précisément de ce projet de loi –

1. Le premier concerne la deuxième partie, sous la section 6 – *GUIDING PRINCIPLES WITH REGARD TO VICTIMS OF ACTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE*.

2. Et le deuxième concerne la partie 3 – je veux m'attarder sur le *Protection Order*.

Concernant l'obligation de rapporter les actes de violence domestique par les professionnels de santé et par d'autres professionnels, je voudrais partager mon opinion. Je suis particulièrement, en tant que professionnel de santé qui a une expérience de plus de 33 ans à voir les femmes, surtout pour leur carrière, pour leur bien-être et la santé des femmes. J'ai été, comme certains de mes confrères, un témoin très privilégié de certains cas de suspicion de brutalité domestique, voire même physique, sur les femmes.

Protéger une femme enceinte, Madame la présidente, contre les violences domestiques, c'est protéger deux vies à la fois et garantir à l'enfant de naître avec les meilleures chances de venir au monde dans un environnement sûr et empreint de dignité. La protection des femmes enceintes victimes de violence domestique doit être une priorité absolue de toute législation moderne et humaine.

Madame la présidente, quand on parle de femmes enceintes et de violence domestique, à titre d'exemple, ces jeunes femmes viennent vous voir en ne vous disant pas qu'elles ont subi des violences domestiques. Elles vous parlent de saignement, de perte, des yeux cernés, des saignements en de début de grossesse, des yeux au beurre noir, une attitude très farouche, peu bavarde, les lèvres bien gonflées, des taches d'ecchymoses sur le ventre d'une femme enceinte, des taches de brûlures qui sont sur les différentes parties du corps. Et vous allez être surpris, des taches de brûlures qui ressemblent à des taches de brûlures de cigarettes à des places que vous ne croyez pas pouvoir le faire. Et c'est ça ! Et c'est ce drame que 99 % des patientes qui viennent nous voir… nous avons, en tant que professionnels de santé, des explications autres que des violences domestiques.

Mais, Madame la présidente, pour le personnel qui reçoit ces patients, les conséquences médicales de ces mamans, de ces futures mamans, c'est peut-être la perte d'un enfant, l'accouchement prématuré. C'est aussi ce qu'on appelle le *post-traumatic stress syndrome*, un stress avancé. C'est ce qu'on appelle aussi un retard ou absence, refus de suivre le traitement prénatal, des douleurs chroniques, des décollements du placenta et ces conséquences qui parfois peuvent être même fatales.

Madame la présidente, pour le bébé ou le fœtus, c'est parfois un fœtus qui est mort-né. C'est un fœtus qui est accouché trop tôt, et qui a des besoins de support médical dans un établissement peut-être qui n'a pas de place ce jour-ci. Accouchement prématuré, retard de croissance intra-utérine, faible taux de poids de naissance. Et des bébés qui, après leur

accouchement, ne font que crier et ne font que pleurer parce qu'ils ont été sujets à des traumatismes physiques et ont entendu ces bagarres incessantes qu'ont éprouvées leurs mamans pendant la grossesse.

Madame la présidente, les explications entre les quatre coins d'une consultation, quand l'on voit ces signes que je viens de vous décrire, ils vous laisseront bouche bée à tous ici. Personne ne viendra vous dire – 99 % de ces dames ne viendront pas vous dire qu'elles ont été sujettes à des brutalités domestiques. Elles vous diraient, à mon collègue, à moi, ou d'autres : 'Docteur, j'ai glissé dans la salle de bain, 'J'ai essayé d'éviter une bagarre entre mes deux amis et je me suis fait taper dans l'œil', 'J'avais pris un verre de vin ou de bière de trop, et j'ai oublié d'éteindre ma cigarette et je me suis brûlée sur ma partie du corps', 'Je me suis heurtée au coin de la table', 'Mon petit neveu était venu jouer chez moi durant le weekend et s'est tapé la tête contre moi'. Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, tout cela, ce sont des excuses. Pourquoi des excuses ? Pourquoi ces femmes qui sont victimes de brutalité physique ou psychologique ou d'autres, font des excuses ?

Des excuses parce qu'il y a la pression financière. Elles ne peuvent pas se tenir debout par elles-mêmes. Des excuses parce que la société dans laquelle nous vivons, cette société a un regard différent sur ces jeunes femmes qui vont être mises hors du toit familial. L'instinct maternel – il faut protéger ma famille, il faut protéger mes enfants, j'ai trois petits enfants à nourrir, je ne peux pas quitter le toit familial, j'ai besoin du support de mon conjoint ou de mon mari, j'ai besoin de son support financier. Il y a la peur bleue d'être frappée à nouveau parce qu'elle a divulgué ce qu'il ne fallait pas dire. Et ces derniers temps, le cyberharcèlement avec des photos intimes. Il y a vraiment la peur pour ces jeunes personnes.

Madame la présidente, dans la section 6 de la deuxième partie, si je peux appeler tous ces groupes de personnes qui seront mis à l'amende ou peut-être sujettes à des actions juridiques, on pourrait les appeler les lanceurs d'alerte. En faisant état de ces observations, ces lanceurs d'alerte peuvent se retrouver dans un long imbroglio juridique, où au final, la victime se rétracte complètement ou devient même dans le cas juridique, un témoin hostile. Souvent, c'est l'instinct maternel de sauvegarder sa petite famille qui fait oublier et pardonner. Ce sont ces observations que les *frontliners*, les personnels médicaux et autres, ont pu constater des années auparavant.

Mais il y a aussi, je ne peux pas disputer, un des raisons, c'est le réchauffement de l'amour entre le conjoint et la personne qui a été si brutalement blessée. La confidentialité des

dossiers médicaux reste très épineuse et le long procès en cours n'encourage pas toujours les professionnels.

Madame la présidente, je suis totalement en faveur d'informer les autorités compétentes s'il y a des soupçons de violence domestique et je recommanderai que premièrement, une hotline directe au département responsable des violences domestiques au ministère de l'Égalité des genres et du bien-être de la famille pour tous les professionnels de santé dans les hôpitaux publics et privés. Je précise, une hotline confidentielle que pour le personnel médical et paramédical ou d'autres pour qu'en toute confidentialité, on puisse être un lanceur d'alerte et ce département pourrait relier après.

Deuxièmement, c'est aussi très important comme ça se fait dans certains pays d'Europe où j'y étais moi-même, un formulaire dans toutes les consultations pour inscrire les détails confidentiels de ceux qu'on suspecte ont été victimes de violence et être envoyé au ministère de l'Égalité des genres et du bien-être de la famille en toute confidentialité. Pour ce formulaire, Madame la présidente, je me mets à la disposition du ministère de l'Égalité des genres et du bien-être de la famille pour rédiger ce formulaire et donner tout mon support et ma connaissance pour le faire.

Et troisièmement, une unité spéciale au ministère de la Sécurité sociale et aussi de l'Égalité des genres et du bien-être de la famille avec qui sont attachés des *police medical officers*. Pourquoi des *police médical officers*? Ce sont ces médecins formés, dans le giron de la police qui pourront évaluer les suspicions que les personnes au *frontline* ont pu constater, analyser et voir s'il y a matière à poursuite et compléter le contexte juridique pour pouvoir mener à bien les procédures judiciaires ultérieurement.

Madame la présidente, trop c'est trop. Il faut que les lanceurs d'alerte, tel que moi par exemple, ont un accès beaucoup plus fluide et moins de tracasserie juridique et policière. C'est ça qui décourage les lanceurs d'alerte, c'est ça qui décourage les personnes qui voient ces personnes en premier lieu de continuer à dire ce qu'ils ont vu.

Madame la présidente, je dirais quelques mots sur le *protection order*. Il n'est pas normal que depuis janvier 2025 jusqu'à ce jour, sur 8 femmes, 7 ont été tuées par leur conjoint alors qu'elles avaient *un protection order*. Il devrait y avoir quelque chose qui va mal. Il doit y avoir un problème d'efficacité sur le *protection order* ou la situation sociétale a tellement évolué que ces bourreaux n'ont plus peur des *protection orders* et n'ont plus de respect pour la loi.

Madame la présidente, auparavant c'était 14 jours, maintenant c'est 7 jours pour l'obtention d'un *protection order*, tant mieux. Mais considérant la gravité des circonstances. Parfois, c'est long, même 7 jours, je dirais. Et là, je fais un appel pour qu'il y ait un triage. Un triage des cas qui sont rapportés au ministère de l'Égalité des genres et du bien-être de la famille pour les récidives et surtout, hautement sérieuses, pour que ces permis soient délivrés dans un minimum de 3 jours. Un triage de tous les cas. On ne peut pas traiter tous les cas de la même intensité de brutalité domestique.

Madame la présidente, je demande haut et fort, sans équivoque, la considération de l'application du bracelet électronique à ceux dont le risque de causer des torts immenses soit appliqués. Il va falloir nous découdre des *red tape* administratifs, du coût financier et d'autres petits inconvénients car la vie d'une personne n'a pas de prix. Le port du bracelet électronique, en mon opinion, découragerait beaucoup à commettre l'irréparable envers leur conjoint ou les faibles de cette société.

Madame la présidente, si l'ancien président de la République française, M. Nicolas Sarkozy a dû porter un bracelet électronique, bref, pourquoi ces futurs voyous et bourreaux de notre société envers nos femmes soient exclus ? Il n'y a pas de raison pour ça.

En conclusion, je parlerai de Kofi Annan qui nous rappelait que la violence contre les femmes est l'une des violations des droits humains les plus honteuses et les plus répandues et que tant qu'elle persistera, nous ne pourrons prétendre avoir réellement progressé vers l'égalité, le développement et la paix. C'est cette conviction qui anime notre gouvernement, notre adjoint Premier ministre. Notre volonté est claire. Aucune femme ne doit vivre dans la peur sous son propre toit et aucun enfant ne doit grandir dans l'ombre de la violence. La protection des femmes et des enfants n'est pas pour nous, une simple déclaration d'intention. C'est un devoir d'État, une responsabilité morale et d'une exigence de justice sociale.

Merci.

Madam Speaker: Merci, Dr. Aumeer. Yes, hon. A. Duval.

(5.26 p.m.)

Mr A. Duval (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying without any ambiguity, clearly on the subject, that we stand with the victims. We stand with the women who suffer in silence. We

stand also with the men who are often themselves victims but do not speak of it because of shame, fear or believe that they will not be taken seriously. We stand with the children who hear the screams, who see the fears, who grew up in homes where love is replaced by control, humiliation, violence and substance abuse.

Domestic abuse, Madam Speaker, is not a private matter. It is not a family quarrel. It is not something to be hidden, excused, minimised or condoned. It is an attack on dignity, an attack on safety, an attack on freedom and too often, the warning sign for tragedy. Let there be no ambiguity. Madam Speaker, we support the fight against domestic violence. We support the principle of this Bill. We support the widening of the law. We support the recognition that abuse is not only physical abuse, it can be psychological; it can be emotional. It can be economic, it can be digital, it can be coercive control, it can be intimidation, humiliation, fear, threats and domination.

Madam Speaker, the question before us, however, is not only whether the text of the Bill is good. That it is. It is whether the system behind it is ready because a law can be as beautifully drafted but still fail in practice. It can create rights and still fail when the victim has nowhere to go. It can create orders and still fail when these orders are not monitored. It can create offenses and still fail when investigations are delayed. It can promise protection and still fail when there is no shelter, no emergency accommodation, no follow-up, no trained officer, no rehabilitation pathway and no proper integrated data system. We support this Bill but we must ensure that it does not become another law that protects victims strongly on paper while leaving them exposed in real life.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius did not start from zero in 2026. The Protection from Domestic Violence Act 1997 was imported. It created for the first time, a dedicated legal framework against domestic violence. It introduced protection orders, occupation orders, tenancy orders and other court-based remedies. It gave victims a route to seek protection but the 1997 Act, Madam Speaker, was essentially a civil, protective and order-based framework.

The victim applied. The court granted the order. The system was built around that court order. It was an important first step, but it was still too much a system where the victim had to carry the burden. The truly transformative moment, Madam Speaker, came in 2016.

In 2016, under the then hon. Minister of Gender, hon. Aurore Perraud, Mauritius took a tremendous step forward. It was not a cosmetic amendment. It was not a minor reform. It was a life-changing reform. It changed the philosophy of the law. Domestic violence was no

longer treated merely as a private matter or only as a civil issue between two persons. It became a matter of public responsibility, police intervention, State accountability and criminal liability.

The 2016 reform widened the definition of domestic violence, recognised important non-physical forms of violence: intimidation, harassment, stalking, ill-treatment, insults, cruelty, threats, deprivation of resources was also there, and economic vulnerability. It clarified who could seek protection, strengthened enforcement officers, and it inserted very specific duties on the police, and it also increased penalties.

Most importantly, Madam Speaker, it made the act of domestic violence itself an offence. That was the real turning point. After 2016, Madam Speaker, domestic violence was no longer about obtaining a civil order. It became a wrong which the State itself had to confront, prevent, investigate, and punish.

Madam Speaker, I say so from what I have seen in real life. I knew of a man, a neighbour, who used to beat his wife. This is not theory, Madam Speaker. That woman was living in fear. When came the 2016 amendments, and when the person did the mistake again of beating his wife, this time, he was taken to task.

This time, he was arrested. As much of a bully as he was, Madam Speaker, he then understood what was in store for him. He never dared after that lift a finger on his wife again. Never! So, Madam Speaker, that is why the 2016 amendment mattered. You know, Madam Speaker, many perpetrators are bullies, and bullies understand consequences. The moment the State is firm, the moment there is real intervention, the moment a court order is in force, the behaviour can stop.

But if the system hesitates, if files are delayed, if orders are not followed up, then, the bully learns the opposite lesson – that the system is weak. That is why I say today, clearly and proudly, that the amendments back then were tremendous, courageous, and transformative reforms, and we are proud of that. But nearly 10 years later, we must also be honest. The law moved faster than the machinery of implementation.

That is why, while we support this Bill, we must ask whether Government has finally built the system needed to make the protection real, efficient and swift. Madam Speaker, this Bill broadens the existing law, updates the language, expands the forms of abuse covered, introduces new mechanism. It is welcomed. But the real question is whether the machinery

behind can carry the extensive weight of what we are now asking it to do? This brings me to a practical point, Madam Speaker.

In reality, we see two major forms of domestic abuse. The first, spouse on spouse violence. A husband against his wife, for example. A wife against a husband. A partner against a partner. This Bill clearly speaks to that reality. It creates the wider definitions necessary – the protection order, the exclusion orders, the offences, the rehabilitation mechanism. But even there, Madam Speaker, everything will depend on the implementation. I will come to it later.

But the second form is a different one, Madam Speaker. I believe that this Bill does not sufficiently address it. It is the growing number of parents or spouses who are threatened, intimidated, insulted, assaulted, extorted by someone in their own homes for money to buy drugs. That is also domestic abuse. We are not speaking of money to go and buy marijuana here, Madam Speaker. Let us be honest about this. We are speaking about synthetic drugs, about hard drugs, heroin, drugs that destroy families, destroy judgment, destroy homes, and turn parents and spouses into victims inside their own houses.

A mother, Madam Speaker, should not be afraid of her own son. A father should not have to hide his pension from his own child. A wife should not be threatened for money to buy drugs. A spouse should not live in fear because addiction has taken over her home.

The Bill may punish violence after it happens. But if we do not deal with the addiction behind that violence rather, the cycle is bound to continue. That is where precisely the State is failing. The latest figures from 2024, Madam Speaker, show that only 500 persons have been rehabilitated in 2024 for the public rehabilitation centres operated by the State. 500! That is 500 out of 55,000 drug users. That is less than 1%. The real long-term success rate is probably even lower, as you know, Madam Speaker, the risk of relapse is huge in this respect.

Madam Speaker, this is not a serious rehabilitation response to a national drug crisis. If we want to protect parents and spouses from drug-related domestic abuse, then, we cannot only talk about punishment. We must also talk about treatment, about rehabilitation, about follow-up, and about reintegration. We must also have the courage to say this, Madam Speaker, and I am saying it now: Mauritius must decriminalise the use of marijuana now. The time has come!

Because the violence that we are seeing in homes, the extortions, the threats, the terror imposed on parents and spouses, is not driven by that. It is driven by the harder drugs. We

must be honest about that as well. So, why keep wasting resources and police time on this? Madam Speaker, if we are serious about domestic abuse, we must also be serious about the drug crisis that is creating victims in their own home.

Let us now look at the machinery that is expected to carry this, Bill. As at 30 June 2025, Madam Speaker, the police had 205,531 outstanding cases. In 2020, that figure was 147,702. There has been an increase of nearly 58,000 outstanding cases in the last five years. Outstanding cases mean open cases which are ongoing. Madam Speaker, misdemeanours inquiries alone, where cases of domestic violence fall within, stood as at 2025, at 54,000, up by nearly double by 25,000 since 2020.

So, Madam Speaker, if this Bill is to give more responsibilities to the police, we must be honest. We are asking an already overburdened system to carry out even more now.

Madam Speaker, what of now the specialised training that is to come for the Police Force? What of the specialised training to cater for what we have seen in practice: people often being turned away or inadequately treated by inadequately trained police officers? What about cases that are unproperly treated by inadequately trained officers? That is the right sequence. What about it?

This Bill promises, but offers no funding for that. We do not see the funding. We do not see how the Ministry is now going to be able to embark on a huge and consequential training programme to train every frontline police officer and desk officer in all the police stations in the Republic of Mauritius. We do not see it, Madam Speaker.

Now, Madam Speaker, what about those victims who withdraw their complaints? We have seen here that the matter is now to be referred to the DPP, as it was already in practice, but with the added – and it is a good thing – now provision that the DPP may ask for a Social Inquiry Report. The problem remains, however, Madam Speaker, in practice, that when the Police record a retraction, a withdrawal of the declaration, they do not carry out a further investigation into the matter. That is that. They take the declaration, they take the withdrawal, and the case is sent to the DPP for a decision. The problem, Madam Speaker, without the clear checklist, without a clear protocol, that problem may remain.

Madam Speaker, the UK, for example, has a very different approach. It recognises that persons who often retract have been pressurised into doing so. And therefore, it removes the right of retraction from the victim and has an independent assessment of whether that retraction is being done voluntarily, and that is where the keyword is, voluntarily. Madam

Speaker, I fail to see in this how the proper mechanism is being implemented to ensure that investigations are properly carried out even where there is a retraction.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the data, one thing is clear. Victims are entering the system, but the system is not converting those applications into effective protection at the same rate that it used to. In 2017, there were, for example, 1,900 applications for Protection Orders, which resulted in 1,113 final Protection Orders being issued. That means that final Protection Orders represented nearly 60% of the applications. In 2024, by contrast, there were fewer applications, 1,500, but only 581 final Protection Orders were issued. That is only 38%, a reduction by 20%. So, Madam Speaker, those are the signs that the machine is being clogged up.

The same is for Occupation Orders, Madam Speaker. If you look at the figures today, you would be shocked to know that only four final Occupation Orders have been issued in the last year against 13 in 2017. Clearly, Madam Speaker, the machine has been clogged up, and we are now adding more work to that machine. So, if the system cannot turn complaints and applications into real protection, then the promise that this Bill makes remains theoretical.

Madam Speaker, very quickly, let me talk about cybersecurity, cybercrime offences. The hon. Dr. Aumeer has touched on that.

Madam Speaker: I have given him three minutes.

Mr A. Duval: Yes.

Madam Speaker: And I will give you three minutes as well, we said.

Mr A. Duval: Alright.

Madam Speaker: We agree.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, cybersecurity offences. You will see, Madam Speaker, those are also on the rise. Just to give you the figures from 2020, those have risen to 1,400 unresolved cybersecurity offences to 2,200 in 2025. And the abuse has moved, we know that, into phone messages, social media accounts, the threat, the surveillance, the blackmail, digital humiliation. But if unresolved cases, Madam Speaker, have doubled in the last five years, what guarantee do we have that this Bill is not going to worsen the system, but will, in fact, turn it on its head and improve it? This is what I want to know. What guarantee do we have? The lack of funding suggests – if you look at the funding, if you look at the budget of the

Ministry – the 80% increase only due to PRB increases, you will see that the funding does not go to where the intentions go in this Bill, and that is the issue.

Madam Speaker, there are not many minutes left.

Madam Speaker: You have to round up.

Mr A. Duval: I will conclude. What about, Madam Speaker, shelters? The issue of shelters; we have four shelters, two of which only receive Capitation Grants, that is, that they receive money per person attending them. They do not get money to invest in the infrastructure. They do not get money to invest in the training of staff. They do not even get money to pay for the training of their staff. So, whilst we recognise that we must send more victims to shelters, that we must guarantee their safety and their confidentiality, a safe space, we are not putting the money where it needs to be.

Madam Speaker, I had a lot to say...

Madam Speaker: Yes, of course!

Mr A. Duval: Unfortunately, as you know, this Bill, unfortunately...

Madam Speaker: The subject is vast.

Mr A. Duval: It is vast.

Madam Speaker: Lots of your friends have already addressed...

Mr A. Duval: Let me say...

Madam Speaker: ...some of the issues.

Mr A. Duval: Let me just say, Madam Speaker, let me reiterate then, that I do support the Bill.

Madam Speaker: Of course!

Mr A. Duval: Let me also reiterate that I do not doubt that the hon. Minister has the greatest of intentions in this Bill.

Madam Speaker: You will help.

Mr A. Duval: But what I do doubt, is that Government has been putting adequate resources, either to ensure that Police inquiries find the light of day, either to ensure that shelters can adequately protect the victims...

Madam Speaker: *Non, là ça...*

Mr A. Duval: ...either to ensure that, Madam Speaker, there is adequate staffing in the Family Services Bureau, then I would truly be satisfied. *Merci.*

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr A. Duval: Truly be satisfied that we are moving in the right direction.

But I will say to conclude, Madam Speaker, and I thank you for additional time, what I will say is that I hope to see in the next figures...

Madam Speaker: You will give a hand!

Mr A. Duval: ...substantial increase in the budget of that Ministry, so that this hon. Minister can effectively...

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr A. Duval: ...bring changes where needed. But until then, it will remain, unfortunately, a question.

Madam Speaker: *Terminez bien en beauté!* The hon. Minister is taking notes. She is listening and taking notes! Hon. Ms Leu-Govind! I will give you a couple of minutes more!

(5.47 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Arts and Culture (Ms M. V. Leu-Govind): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: But you will do your best!

(Interruptions)

Hey! Hey! That is enough!

(Interruptions)

Please allow hon. Ms Leu-Govind to make her speech!

Ms Leu-Govind: Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui, je prends parole, pas qu’en tant que député seulement, mais en tant qu'un enfant qui a grandi dans un foyer marqué par la violence. Je prends la parole pour ces femmes, ces hommes, pour ces enfants. Combien de fois j'ai vu ma maman crouler sous les coups ? Combien de fois je l’ai vu dans une mare de sang ? Et l'enfant qui regardait cette scène, c'était nous ; moi, mes frères et mes sœurs. Ce traumatisme ne s’efface jamais, Madame la présidente. Toutes les portes étaient fermées. Il n'y avait pas de

refuge, il n'y avait pas de suivi psychologique, il n'y avait pas de réhabilitation. Nous avons tant de fois marché dans le noir, en pleine nuit pour trouver refuge chez nos proches qui habitaient Plaisance, Kennedy, Bassin, Rivière Noire, Case Noyale. Certaines portes s'ouvraient pendant quelques jours seulement. Puis, elles se refermaient et cette phrase qui résonne encore dans ma mémoire, que souvent mes tantes disaient –

« *Mo mari pa le mo ramas zot paski zot papa pou vinn fer dezord kot nou.* »

Madame la présidente, c'est trop facile aujourd'hui pour certains de venir chanter cocorico dans cette auguste Assemblée. Quand on parle de la violence domestique, il ne faut pas oublier que les femmes subissent aussi des abus partout dans ce monde. Même dans cette auguste Assemblée, pire encore dans des partis politiques. Puisque nous parlons de respect envers les femmes, permettez-moi d'aborder une autre forme de violence ; le respect du choix d'une femme, le respect de sa liberté et le respect de sa conscience. Dans le passé, lorsque j'ai quitté un parti politique, j'ai été critiquée, attaquée, parfois même tournée en dérision. Pourtant, le droit de choisir son engagement politique fait partie de la liberté de chaque femme.

(Interruptions)

Respecter une femme, ce n'est pas seulement condamner la violence qu'elle subit dans son foyer, c'est aussi de respecter son droit de penser par elle-même…

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I will not accept that! Do not talk across the floor, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. A. Duval, please!

Ms Leu-Govind: …son droit de dire non, son droit de suivre ses convictions. Une femme n'est pas la propriété d'aucun parti politique. Elle n'a pas à demander la permission pour choisir le chemin qu'elle estime juste. Qu'ils arrêtent cette hypocrisie, Madame la présidente, et qu'ils aillent se regarder dans un miroir avant.

Comme le 1er juillet était la Journée internationale de reggae, en tant que *Junior Minister* de l'Art et la culture, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de citer le reggaeman Bob Marley pour terminer dessus : « W*ho the cap fit, let them wear it* », Madame la présidente.

En 2014, c'était une occasion ratée. Ils avaient l'occasion, le mandat, la majorité et le moment de procéder à une refonte complète de la loi pour remédier aux lacunes qui depuis, n'ont fait que s'aggraver. Au lieu de cela, j'ai entendu l'honorable Adrien Duval flatter.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Chut !

Ms Leu-Govind: En 2016, ils ont choisi de rapiécer là où il fallait reconstruire. De 2019 à 2024, c'était pire. Rien au Parlement, même pas un amendement.

Le leader de l'opposition - il est déjà parti - qui se vantait de travailler sur ce projet de loi, en 5 ans, c'était zéro ! Où est ce projet de loi ? Peut-être perdu entre les maquillages dans un sac à main, on ne sait pas. En dix ans, zéro.

Madame la présidente, les chiffres parlent d'eux-mêmes –

- 2222 cas rapportés en 2019 ;
- 5381 en 2022 ;
- 5758 en 2024.

C'est énorme, Madame la présidente.

Sous le cadre légal qu'ils ont légué, le nombre de victimes a plus que doublé tandis que près de 40 % rapporté l'année dernière, relevait de la violence psychologique ou économique, relevait des formes de violence que leurs lois ne reconnaissent même pas. Alors que certains se tiennent, aujourd'hui, devant cette Chambre pour donner des leçons à ce gouvernement sur la protection des victimes qui n'est simplement pas incohérent, mais un exercice d'amnésie collectif. Où était ce zèle nouveau de 2014 à 2024 lorsqu'ils siégeaient sur les bancs avec le pouvoir d'agir ? Les victimes de la violence domestique n'avaient pas ce luxe d'attendre une décennie pour que sa conscience se réveille.

Madame la présidente, ce gouvernement ne répétera pas cette erreur. Là où ils ont amendé, nous reconstruisons. Là où ils ne punissaient que les ecchymoses visibles, nous nommons les blessures invisibles. Et là où ils laissaient les victimes affronter seules le système, nous plaçons à leur côté toute la machinerie de l'État.

Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de parler plus simplement au nom des foyers de ce pays où se déroulent réellement les histoires qui sont derrière ce projet de loi. Madame la présidente, chaque personne dans cette auguste Assemblée et de ce pays connaît au moins une de ces histoires. Parfois c'est un proche ou si nous sommes honnêtes, notre propre miroir. Laissez-moi partager quelque chose que j'ai vécu récemment et cela dépasse la politique. J'ai, moi-même, hébergé une victime de violence domestique chez moi pendant des mois, sans trompette, sans caméra, sans TikTok, sans me poser des questions comme : *Ki pou arrive e kouma mo pou fer* ? Elle n'avait nulle part où aller. Elle n'avait même pas sa carte d'identité sur elle. Aujourd'hui, elle a un permis de conduire, elle travaille et elle est indépendante. Elle a trouvé sa dignité et je suis très fière.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de simplifier ce que la loi de 1997 ne pouvait pas faire. Sous cette loi, quand vous venez dans un tribunal pour demander la protection, la première question était en substance : Êtes-vous l'épouse ? Êtes-vous l'époux ? La loi avait du mal à vous voir si vous n'étiez pas marié à la personne qui vous faisait du mal. La loi lâchait les mains des victimes dès qu'elles abandonnaient le toit conjugal. La femme qui a trouvé le courage de partir, l'enfant qui a été témoin de cette violence, la loi ne les comptait pas comme victimes. Les grands-mères maltraitées chaque jour, les grands-parents, la loi n'avait presque rien à leur dire. Même le frère, la sœur qui partagent la maison familiale avec quelqu'un de violent, rien du tout.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi change la question. Il ne demande plus : Êtes-vous l'époux ou l'épouse ? Il demande tout simplement : Êtes-vous victime de violence sous votre propre toit ? Si la réponse est oui, cette loi est désormais pour vous. Voilà le cœur de ce projet de loi et cela peut se dire en une phrase : Plus personne qui vit dans la peur dans sa propre maison sera invisible aux yeux de la loi.

Madame la présidente, enfin, ce projet de loi reconnaît que la violence ne laisse pas toujours des bleus. Demandez à n'importe qui, qui l'a vécu, le mari ou la femme qui ne lève jamais la main, mais qui prend son salaire le jour où il arrive, qui décide de ce qu'ils peuvent

acheter, de ce qu'ils peuvent voir, s'ils peuvent rendre visite à leur propre mère – et à qui on répète, année après année, qu'il ne va rien se passer jusqu'à ce qu'ils y croient eux-mêmes – qui prend son téléphone, sa carte bancaire, sa carte d'identité sous la menace de partir avec ses enfants. Madame la présidente, il n'y a pas de cicatrice à photographier. Il n'y a pas de certificat médical et pourtant une personne peut être détruite ainsi, aussi sûrement que par un coup de poing. Pour la première fois, ce projet de loi nomme le contrôle de l'argent, l'humiliation, l'isolement, le chantage et les appelle par le nom que chaque personne leur a toujours connu – 'de la violence'.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de parler de nos aînés, car en tant que femme, nous sommes si souvent celles qui prennent soin d'eux et trop souvent celles qui les regardent souffrir. En mars dernier, la presse racontait encore l'histoire d'une veuve de 68 ans, à Quatre Bornes, qui endure depuis 15 ans, la violence de son fils perdu dans la drogue. Il a emporté de sa maison l'argent, bijoux et même la vaisselle. Son propre fils, vivant sous le même toit, a été battu par son propre frère à coup de tuyau. Quinze années de plainte à la police, chaque fois la même roue qui tourne : arrestation, libération sous caution, promesse, retour. « *Koumadir pena solision pou bann vie dimounn* », a-t-elle dit. « *Nou bizin sibir mem.* »

Madame la présidente, quand une mère de ce pays prononce ces mots, cette Chambre doit répondre, et elles sont des centaines comme elle. En une seule année, plus d'un millier de cas de maltraitance envers nos aînés ont été recensés. La plupart commis, non par un étranger, mais par un fils, un petit-fils ou un neveu. Plus de la moitié était des insultes, des menaces, de l'intimidation quotidienne. Près de 150 concernaient l'argent, la pension prise, les économies vidées, les personnes âgées forcées à signer des papiers qu'elles ne comprenaient même pas.

Dans une autre affaire, une mère de 65 ans s'est entendu dire par son propre fils que si elle allait à la police, il la tuerait. Tout ça pour R 200 pour acheter de la drogue. R 200, Madame la présidente, voilà ce qui valait la tranquillité d'une mère dans sa propre maison.

Alors, que fait concrètement ce projet de loi pour ces femmes, pour ces mères, pour ces familles ? Laissez-moi le dire simplement. Premièrement, vous pouvez aller, vous-même, au tribunal demander un *Protection Order*. Et si vous êtes âgés, fragiles ou effrayés, un officier ira le faire pour vous.

Deuxièmement, ce ne sera plus la victime qui fera ses valises. Pour la première fois, le tribunal peut ordonner à l'agresseur de quitter la maison pour que la mère ou le père et ses enfants restent chez eux, dans leur lit, dans leurs écoles, dans leur quartier, et que ce soit celui qui a apporté la violence qui s'en aille.

Troisièmement, cela ne coûte rien. Pas une roupie, pas de frais, pas de timbre, pas besoin de la bourse d'un avocat pour être en sécurité. Parce qu'une protection qu'il faut payer n'est pas un luxe pour une personne qui n'a pas les moyens.

Quatrièmement, quand le danger est immédiat, le tribunal peut agir sur le champ. Le jour même, même à distance, parce qu'une femme en danger ne peut pas attendre une date d'audience.

En cinquième, et ceci, Madame la présidente, me touche profondément en tant que femme, l'ordonnance ne dormira pas dans un tiroir. Quelqu'un revient, un officier retourne à sa porte tous les trois mois. Pendant toute la durée de l'ordonnance pour poser des questions que la personne ne posait pas avant : êtes-vous en sécurité ?

Et quand le bourreau est libéré sous caution ou sort de prison, elle n'est pas laissée à découvrir quand la personne apparaît à son portail. Les autorités sont prévenues immédiatement. Parce que nous avons tous vu, Madame la présidente, ce que vaut un morceau de papier quand personne ne veille dessus. Nous avons enterré trop de sœurs. Neuf l'année dernière. Au moins 24 depuis 2020. Chacune était la fille de quelqu'un, la mère de quelqu'un.

Madame la présidente, nous ne votons pas cette loi pour les statistiques. Nous le votons pour qu'aucun nom s'ajoute à cette longue liste. Maintenant, Madame la présidente, j'ai entendu l'inquiétude soulevée de l'autre côté de la Chambre et je vais y répondre en tant que femme honnêtement parce que les femmes n'ont rien à gagner d'une loi où on peut abuser. Certains craignent qu'une personne jalouse, amère, utilise la loi pour porter des fausses accusations. Soyons clair sur ce que ce projet de loi exige réellement. Une femme qui demande la protection doit jurer sous serment. Ce qu'elle dit est vrai. Mentir sous serment dans ce pays est un crime très grave, très sévèrement puni.

L'homme n'est pas condamné dans l'ombre. Il est convoqué devant le tribunal en quelques jours. Il donne sa version. Il apporte ses propres preuves. C'est un magistrat, pas l'accusatrice, qui décide. Et s'il estime que l'ordonnance est injuste, il peut retourner devant le

tribunal pour faire appel plus haut encore. Alors, à la femme qui souffre vraiment, ce projet de loi vient dire : la porte est ouverte et cela ne coûte rien.

Madam Speaker: Il faudra conclure.

Ms Leu-Govind: Et quiconque serait tenté de mentir, réfléchissez bien, car le même serment qui protège les vraies victimes condamnera les fausses.

Madame la présidente, laissez-moi conclure. Je ne sais pas si c'est un simple hasard ou si c'est le destin. Lors de mon enfance et de mon adolescence sombres, je n'aurais jamais cru qu'un jour ma voix compterait dans cette auguste Assemblée et encore moins pour voter le *Domestic Abuse Bill* qui me tient vraiment à cœur.

Je remercie toutes les personnes qui m'ont soutenu et qui m'ont tendu la main, et je remercie la DPM, l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, ainsi que notre Attorney General, l'honorable Gavin Glover, d'avoir travaillé dur pour apporter cette loi devant cette auguste Assemblée. Et un merci spécial à cette grande dame, cette battante, cette survivante qui est ma maman. J'apporte pleinement mon soutien à ce projet de loi.

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Merci pour votre franchise.

Hon. Foo Kune-Bacha!

(6.05 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Youth and Sports (Ms K. Foo Kune-Bacha) : Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui, nous ne débattons pas simplement d'un projet de loi. Il est question de vie, de victimes qui se réveillent chaque matin avec l'angoisse de prononcer un mot de trop ou de faire un geste de trop. Des femmes qui, chaque soir, ferment les yeux sans savoir si elles se réveilleront le lendemain. D'enfants qui grandissent en croyant que les cris, les insultes, les coups et la peur font partie de la vie de famille. Des parents qui ont enterré une fille.

Des enfants qui grandissent sans leurs mères. Une sœur partie beaucoup trop tôt. Victime de celui qui avait pourtant promis de l'aimer et de la protéger. En tant que femme, cette réalité me bouleverse. En tant que mère, elle me terrifie. Car aucune mère ne souhaite voir sa fille grandir dans un monde où elle devra un jour avoir peur de rentrer chez elle. Aucun parent ne souhaite que son enfant grandisse convaincu que la violence est une preuve d'amour ou un moyen de régler les conflits.

Et oui, je parle principalement de femmes, car 90% des victimes de violence domestique sont les femmes. À chaque féminicide, à chaque victime qui succombe à la violence domestique, ce n'est pas seulement une vie qui s'éteint. C'est une famille qui est détruite. C'est toute une société qui est profondément meurtrie.

La violence domestique, Madame la présidente, est l'une des formes de violence les plus cruelles car elle détruit non seulement le corps, mais aussi la dignité, la confiance et l'espoir. Elle s'attaque au cœur même du foyer qui est censé être le premier refuge de chacun. Derrière chaque statistique se cache un prénom, un visage, une histoire, des rêves interrompus et des proches qui continueront à vivre avec l'absence impossible à combler. Si nous sommes réunis aujourd'hui, c'est parce que notre devoir est d'empêcher que ces drames continuent de se répéter.

Cependant, Madame la présidente, c'est aussi un fait qu'aucune loi, aussi noble et ambitieuse soit-elle, ne peut garantir qu'aucune victime ne perdra plus jamais la vie sous les coups de son agresseur. Mais ce que cette loi peut faire, c'est intervenir plus tôt, protéger plus efficacement et réduire considérablement les risques que la violence ne s'aggrave jusqu'à l'irréparable.

Ce projet de loi marque une véritable évolution dans notre lutte contre la violence domestique. Il ne se limite plus à réagir après les drames, mais adopte une approche globale fondée sur la prévention, la protection, la coordination et la responsabilisation.

Pendant longtemps, Madame la présidente, la violence domestique a été réduite aux bleus sur le corps. Pourtant, les cicatrices les plus profondes sont souvent invisibles. Les mots qui détruisent l'estime de soi. Le contrôle qui prive de la liberté. Les menaces qui réduisent au silence. Les privations financières qui rendent toute fuite impossible. Les violences numériques qui poursuivent les victimes jusque dans leur téléphone. Je salue donc que ce *Domestic Abuse Bill* reconnaisse enfin cette réalité vécue par de nombreuses victimes et élargisse la définition des violences domestiques pour inclure les violences psychologiques, émotionnelles, économiques, coercitives et numériques.

Ce projet de loi place désormais la victime au centre du système de protection et il reconnaît que les enfants exposés à la violence domestique ne sont pas de simples témoins, mais de véritables victimes collatérales. Un enfant, bien qu'il ne soit pas directement frappé, mais qui grandit dans un foyer où règnent la peur, les cris et la violence, subit des traumatismes profonds qui peuvent le marquer pour le reste de sa vie. Et je suggère, Madame

la présidente, un suivi psychologique spécialisé systématique pour ces enfants victimes collatérales de ces violences domestiques.

Madame la présidente, ce projet de loi innove et remplace les *Occupation Orders* et *Tenancy Orders* par un *Exclusion Order*, un mécanisme plus simple et plus efficace. Les dispositifs existants se sont révélés complexes, peu utilisés et insuffisants pour garantir une protection rapide et effective. Pendant trop longtemps, ce sont les victimes qui devaient quitter leur foyer pour se mettre en sécurité avec leurs enfants, au prix d'un immense bouleversement émotionnel, social et économique. J'ai critiqué cela moi-même à maintes reprises dans le passé et cela me réjouit qu'aujourd'hui que ce gouvernement renverse cette logique.

Avec *l'Exclusion Order*, le principe est désormais clair. Ce n'est plus à la victime de partir, c'est à l'auteur des violences d'être exclu du domicile familial et permet ainsi à la victime de conserver son logement, sa stabilité et son environnement tout en évitant les traumatismes supplémentaires liés à un déplacement forcé. Et lorsque l'exclusion du domicile n'est pas possible, le tribunal pourra ordonner à l'agresseur de fournir un logement alternatif convenable à la victime et à ses enfants. Et ce projet de loi va encore plus loin en demandant au tribunal de prendre en considération la continuité de la vie des enfants et de leur éducation. C'est une approche profondément humaine qui reconnaît enfin que ce n'est pas à la victime de porter les conséquences des actes qu'elle subit, mais bien à l'agresseur d'en assumer les conséquences.

Ce projet de loi, Madame la présidente, ne se contente pas de protéger les victimes après les faits. Il encourage toute la société à agir plus tôt. Avec la clause 5, les professionnels qui sont souvent les premiers à détecter les signes de violence – médecins, infirmiers, psychologues, travailleurs sociaux, conseillers familiaux et autres personnes ayant un devoir de protection –, auront l'obligation de signaler les situations préoccupantes. Et les citoyens, eux aussi, pourront alerter les autorités. Surtout grâce à la clause 6, toute personne qui effectue un signalement de bonne foi sera protégée contre toute responsabilité civile ou pénale.

Ce projet de loi s'attaque également à un autre frein majeur : la peur de ne pas être entendu. Trop de victimes hésitent encore à demander de l'aide par honte, par peur ou parce qu'elles craignent de ne pas être prises au sérieux au poste de police. Désormais, peu importe

où les faits ont eu lieu, peu importe où réside la victime, le poste de police devra obligatoirement enregistrer la déposition et engager rapidement une enquête.

Madame la présidente, je salue un projet de loi qui non seulement promet une meilleure protection, mais qui donne les moyens d'agir plus vite et plus efficacement. Des procédures accélérées, des ordonnances facilitées par les moyens technologiques, des audiences à distance, une meilleure coordination entre les institutions, un suivi régulier des agresseurs, des sanctions renforcées en cas de violation des ordonnances, ainsi que des programmes de réhabilitation pour prévenir la récidive.

Mais la violence domestique, Madame la présidente, ne trouve pas son origine dans la colère d'un instant. Elle prend racine dans les stéréotypes que nous transmettons parfois sans même nous en rendre compte. Elle naît lorsqu'on apprend à un garçon que la virilité s'exprime par le contrôle ou le refus de montrer ses émotions. Qu'un homme pour être un homme doit dominer. Lorsqu'on apprend à nos fils '*ki vre zom pa plore, ki se zom port pantalon dan lakaz'*.

Elle grandit lorsqu'on apprend à une fille que le sacrifice est une vertu, que supporter en silence est une obligation et que préserver son foyer est plus important que préserver sa propre vie. Lorsqu'on leur dit –

« Li fer sa parski li kontan twa »

« Enn bon fam bizin ekout so mari »

« Fam bizin konn so plas »

Elle prospère lorsque la société demande à la victime –

« *Ki to'nn fer pou li lev lamin lor twa ?* »

Au lieu de demander à l'agresseur –

« *Kifer to'nn maltret to fam* ? »

Chaque fois que nous excusons un comportement abusif au nom de la tradition, de la culture ou de l'honneur de la famille avec des *'ki dimoun pou dir',* nous contribuons à perpétuer un cycle qui détruit des vies. Pendant trop longtemps notre société a banalisé les insultes, le contrôle, la jalousie excessive ou l'humiliation en les qualifiant de simples disputes de couple ou d'affaires privées. '*Pa al rakont zafer lakaz deor*.'

Ces idées transmises de génération en génération ont trop longtemps servi d'alibi à l'inacceptable. Elles ont réduit des victimes au silence, culpabilisé celles qui trouvaient enfin le courage de partir et parfois même conduit notre société à chercher des excuses à l'agresseur plutôt qu'à tendre la main à la victime. La réponse ne peut donc être uniquement judiciaire. Mais elle doit être profondément humaine et culturelle.

Elle passe par l'éducation de nos enfants à l'école comme à la maison. Elle passe par des garçons élevés dans le respect plutôt que dans la domination et par des filles qui grandissent en sachant que leur dignité, leur liberté et leur sécurité ne sont jamais négociables. Elle passe par des campagnes de sensibilisation, par une parole publique responsable, par des médias responsables, mais aussi par chacun d'entre nous qui avons le devoir de ne plus détourner le regard lorsque la violence frappe derrière une porte fermée. C'est précisément la force de ce *Domestic Abuse Bill*. Il ne se contente pas de réagir au drame et pose les bases pour s'attaquer à leurs causes profondes.

Madame la présidente, au moment de conclure, j'ai une pensée pour toutes ces victimes qui souffrent encore en silence. Pour celles qui cachent leurs blessures. Pour celles qui ont peur de parler. Pour celles qui espèrent encore trouver la force de partir. Et surtout pour celles qui ne sont plus là pour raconter leur histoire. À toutes ces victimes, nous leur devons plus que des mots. Nous leur devons des actes. Nous leur devons ce courage que nous avons eu de changer les lois, mais aussi de changer les mentalités. Car derrière chaque vie sauvée, il y aura une mère qui rentrera chez elle, un enfant qui ne deviendra pas orphelin, une famille qui ne sera pas brisée. Et si cette loi permet de sauver ne serait-ce qu'une vie, alors notre combat au sein de cette auguste Assemblée aura déjà eu un sens.

Je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: Merci d'avoir respecté l'horaire.

Hon. Members, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Please be seated.

(6.18 p.m.)

Ms A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) : M. le président, chers collègues, nous sommes réunis aujourd'hui pour la suite du débat sur le *Domestic Abuse Bill*, un texte qui derrière sa froide appellation juridique, touche au plus

intime de notre société. La vie familiale, le foyer, le lieu où chacun devrait trouver la paix, la tendresse et la sécurité. Trop souvent, hélas, ce lieu devient un espace de peur, de coups, d'insultes et de menaces. Trop souvent, derrière des portes closes, se joue un drame silencieux que la société ne veut pas voir.

Ce projet de loi nous oblige à ouvrir les yeux et à affirmer solennellement que la violence n'a pas sa place au sein de la famille. Je tiens à le dire avec force. Aucune société ne peut prétendre construire la paix si ses foyers sont des champs de bataille. La paix sociale commence à la maison. Si le domicile devient un lieu de terreur intime, alors c'est tout le tissu social qui se déchire.

Pourtant, en défendant ce texte, je veux être très claire. Nous ne sommes pas ici pour opposer la protection des victimes à la préservation de la famille. Bien au contraire, en luttant contre la violence domestique, nous défendons la véritable vocation de la famille qui est d'être un refuge, un espace de respect mutuel, un lieu d'amour authentique et non de domination. Préserver la famille, ce n'est pas se taire face au coup. Ce n'est pas tolérer l'humiliation au nom de la tradition ou du privé. Ce n'est même pas fermer les yeux sur les enfants qui grandissent dans la peur, croyant que l'amour se manifeste par les cris et la douleur.

Préserver la famille, c'est protéger la mère terrorisée, le père humilié et l'enfant traumatisé. C'est oser dire que la dignité de chacun au sein du foyer est sacrée. En ce sens, ce projet de loi est profondément familial. Il défend la famille contre ceux qui la détruisent de l'intérieur. Mais pour être à la hauteur de cet enjeu, nous devons regarder au-delà de la seule répression. Oui, il faut des sanctions claires, fermes, rapides contre les auteurs de violence. Oui, il faut que la loi dise, sans ambiguïté, que personne n'a le droit de lever la main sur son conjoint, sur son enfant, sur un proche. Oui, il faut des ordonnances de protection efficaces, des interventions policières adaptées, des hébergements d'urgence pour les victimes, des dispositifs de suivi pour les agresseurs.

Mais si nous nous contentons de punir à la fin de l'acte sans comprendre, de réagir sans prévenir, nous ne ferons que traiter les symptômes d'une maladie profonde, la culture de la violence. C'est dès le plus jeune âge que nous devons agir. Une société pacifique ne naît pas par hasard ; elle s'éduque, elle se construit et elle s'apprend.

Nous devons apprendre à nos jeunes à vivre ensemble, à accepter la différence, à dialoguer plutôt qu'à frapper, à écouter plutôt qu'à humilier. Nous devons dans nos écoles,

dans nos clubs de jeunesse, dans nos familles, enseigner le respect de l'autre, l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, la gestion des conflits sans recours à la brutalité.

Il ne suffit pas de dire aux enfants que la violence est mal. Il faut leur montrer par l'exemple que l'on peut être en désaccord sans s'insulter, qu'on peut être en colère sans devenir destructeur. Quand un enfant grandit dans un foyer où la violence domine, il apprend, malgré lui, que la force fait la loi, que le plus fort décide, que le cri, c'est le plus puissant que la parole posée. Plus tard, cet enfant risque de reproduire des schémas dans sa propre vie de couple, dans son rôle de parent, dans sa manière d'être citoyen. C'est ainsi que la violence domestique se transmet de génération en génération, créant un spiral infernal.

M. le président, mettre fin à cette spirale infernale, c'est briser la chaîne pour les générations à venir. En adoptant ce *Domestic Abuse Bill*, en le complétant par une véritable politique d'éducation de paix, nous prenons nos responsabilités non seulement envers les victimes d'aujourd'hui, mais envers les enfants de demain.

Je veux également insister sur un fléau qui ronge nos foyers et qui nourrit trop souvent la violence domestique – le fléau de la drogue dont tout le monde en parle. La drogue est une peste moderne qui s'attaque au cœur de nos familles. Elle détruit les personnalités, elle effrite la confiance, elle alimente les disputes financières, elle génère mensonge, agressivité, comportement incontrôlable. Combien de foyers sont aujourd'hui plongés dans la détresse parce qu'un fils, une fille, un conjoint a sombré dans l'addiction ? Combien de scènes de violences domestiques éclatent sur l'effet des substances, de l'alcool, de la dépendance, du désespoir qu'elle entraîne ? On ne peut pas parler sérieusement de protection du foyer sans attaquer de front le trafic de la consommation de drogues qui empoisonne aujourd'hui notre société.

M. le président, c'est pourquoi la lutte contre la violence domestique doit être articulée avec une politique courageuse contre la drogue : démantèlement des réseaux, prévention dans les écoles, prise en charge thérapeutique accessible, soutien aux familles confrontées à l'addiction. Une famille qui se bat seule contre la drogue est une famille en danger. Elle a besoin de soutien, elle a besoin d'accompagnement. Protéger le protéger la famille, c'est lui offrir des ressources, de l'écoute, des structures capables d'aider ceux qui veulent sortir de la dépendance. Là encore, il s'agit d'empêcher que la souffrance, la frustration et la perte de contrôle liée à la drogue ne se traduisent pas par des gestes violents au sein du foyer. Notre

objectif est bien clair – débarrasser notre société de la banalisation de la violence sous toutes ses formes.

Trop souvent, nous tolérons violence verbale. Nous acceptons l'idée qu'une gifle, ce n'est rien, qu'un homme doit montrer qui commande, qu'une femme doit supporter pour préserver le foyer. Ces discours tuent ; ils tuent silencieusement en légitimant l'inacceptable. Ils tuent en convainquant les victimes qu'elles doivent se taire pour ne pas détruire la famille. Je le dis solennellement aujourd'hui dans cet auguste Assemblée. Ce qui détruit la famille, ce n'est pas la parole de la victime, c'est le geste de l'agresseur. Ce qui menace la famille, ce n'est pas la plainte, mais c'est le coup. Le foyer doit être un sanctuaire de paix. Quand une personne, qu'elle soit femme, homme ou enfant, franchit le seuil de sa maison, elle doit se sentir protégée et non menacée. Elle doit se dire, ici, je peux me reposer, je peux être moi-même, je peux parler sans crainte.

Le *Domestic Abuse Bill* doit porter cette promesse. Il doit dire à la victime, tu n'es pas seule, la loi te voit, la loi t'entend et la loi te protège. Il doit dire à l'auteur de violence, tu n'as pas tous les droits parce que tu es le chef de la famille ou parce que tu apportes le salaire à la maison. La violence n'est ni un attribut de l'autorité ni un privilège de la tradition. Elle est un délit, elle est une faute grave et elle sera sanctionnée. Il doit dire aux témoins, aux voisins, aux collègues, aux proches : ton silence peut être complice. Tu as le droit et même le devoir d'alerter. Tu n'es pas en train de détruire une famille en signalant des violences mais tu contribues à sauver des vies. Mais aucun texte, aussi bien écrit soit-il, ne suffira sans une mobilisation collective. Il faut que tous les acteurs de la société soient impliqués – les forces de l'ordre, les magistrats, les travailleurs sociaux, les médecins, les enseignants, les responsables communautaires et religieux, les associations, les médias.

Il faut des formations spécifiques pour que chaque policier, chaque infirmière, chaque directeur d'école sache reconnaître les signes de violence domestique, sache accueillir la parole d'une victime sans jugement, sans minimisation. Il faut que les refuges existent en nombre suffisant, que les lignes d'écoute soient joignables, que les réponses soient rapides, concrètes et humaines.

M. le président, je rêve d'une société où –

- la famille soit véritablement le premier lieu d'éducation à la paix ;
- les parents apprennent à leurs enfants non par la peur, mais par l'exemple ;

- les conflits du couple se règlent par le dialogue, parfois par l'aide extérieure, mais jamais par la violence ;
- les hommes comprennent que le respect n'est pas une faiblesse, que l'égalité avec les femmes ne diminue en rien leur dignité ;
- les femmes savent qu'elles ont le droit de dire ‘non’, le droit d'être protégée et le droit d'être crue,
- les enfants enfin ne grandissent plus dans la terreur, des nuits ponctuées, des cris et des bruits de verre.

En soutenant ce *Domestic Abuse Bill*, nous faisons un choix de civilisation. Nous disons que la force ne fera plus la loi dans l'espace le plus sacré de notre vie, le foyer. Nous disons que la famille ne sera plus utilisée comme un prétexte pour imposer le silence aux victimes. Nous disons que la paix que nous voulons bâtir dans nos rues, dans nos institutions, dans notre nation, commence derrière chaque porte, chaque salon, dans chaque chambre et dans chaque cuisine.

Nous disons que nous voulons pour nos enfants, non seulement un avenir économique meilleur, mais surtout un environnement affectif plus sûr, plus juste et plus humain. Je souhaite qu'un jour, dans notre pays, plus aucun enfant n'ait à se cacher dans un coin de la maison en retenant ses larmes pour ne pas aggraver la situation, qu'aucune femme n'ait plus à maquiller ses bleus en invoquant une chute, qu'aucun homme victime de violence n'ait plus honte de demander de l'aide.

Je souhaite que le mot famille ne soit jamais associé à la peur, mais toujours à la protection et à l'amour. Ce projet de loi ne résoudra pas tout, mais il est une étape décisive sur ce chemin.

Chers collègues, notre responsabilité est immense. En votant ce texte, en l'enrichissant, en l'accompagnant de politiques courageuses en matière d'éducation, de lutte contre la drogue, de soutien aux familles, nous pouvons véritablement changer le visage de notre société. Nous pouvons faire reculer la violence, restaurer la confiance, rebâtir des foyers solides, non par l'autoritarisme, mais par le respect mutuel. Nous pouvons apprendre à toute une génération à vivre ensemble dans la paix.

Avec cette conviction profonde, M. le président, avec cette espérance, avec la pensée tournée vers toutes celles et tous ceux qui souffrent aujourd'hui en silence, derrière des murs

trop épais, que je soutiens pleinement le *Domestic Abuse Bill* pour la protection des victimes, pour la dignité de la famille, pour l'avenir de nos enfants et pour une société enfin délivrée de la tyrannie de la violence, à commencer là où la vie prend racine, à la maison.

Je vous remercie.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member.

Hon. Seeburn!

(6.32 p.m.)

Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I rise to support the Domestic Abuse Bill introduced by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. Today is one of those moments in the life of a nation where Parliament is called upon not merely to legislate, but to define who we are as a people.

The measure before us is about affirming a fundamental truth that every human being has the right to live free from fear, violence and intimidation within their own home. One should know that a home should be a sanctuary where children learn love and not violence, where partners and couples build trust and not fear, and where families nurture hope and not despair.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, domestic abuse is unlike many other crimes. It often happens behind closed doors, hidden from public view, concealed by silence, shame and dependence. Every case file nearly represents a child who witnessed violence. Every complaint is the voice of someone who found extraordinary courage simply to ask for protection. Every statistic represents a mother, a woman who feared returning home.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as legislators, we cannot measure our success only by economic growth or infrastructure. The true strength of a nation is measured by how it protects those who are most vulnerable. The questions are therefore: Why is this Bill necessary? How it will improve our criminal justice and why the Bill should have confidence? The Bill sends a clear message that violence within the family is not a private matter beyond the reach of justice. It is a violation of human dignity and the State has the authority, necessity and the responsibility to intervene. Supporting this Bill is supporting justice over abuse, dignity over humiliation and protection over indifference. Domestic abuse

can affect women, children, men and older persons. Whoever the victims may be, our response must be guided by compassion, fairness and the rule of law.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill does not merely amend the previous law. It replaces an outdated legal framework with legislation that reflects the realities of modern domestic abuse with a broader sense focused on prevention, protection and accountability. Its objective is intended to protect everyone irrespective of gender. It protects women, children, elderly parents, persons with disabilities and every victim of domestic abuse.

Our society has evolved. The law must evolve to recognise that abuse can be physical, psychological, financial, technological and even coercive. Our legal framework must protect victims from every form of domination. This Bill recognises that abuse is not limited to physical violence. A victim can be imprisoned without chains. Psychological abuse destroys confidence, emotional abuse and economic abuse destroys dignity and independence. Coercive and controlling behaviour destroys freedom. Many victims suffer all these types of abuse long before physical abuse occurs.

The most dangerous abusers are not always those who strike first. They are those who isolate their victims from family, monitor every movement, confiscate salaries, threaten children, dictate whom they may speak to and destroy their confidence until they become prisoners within their own homes. In criminal justice, prevention is better than protection after tragedy has occurred. Every murder arising from domestic violence begins long before the fatal assault. It begins with intimidation. It begins with threat, humiliation and coercive control.

If the law intervenes earlier, lives can be saved. This demonstrates that the Bill is preventive rather than punitive.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must be well prepared to implement measures and save lives. Police officers must be better equipped to identify patterns of abuse rather than focusing solely on visible injuries. Modern investigations must also consider text messages, financial records, threats, witness testimony, digital communication and repeated incidents that establish coercive behaviour. Today, abuse may continue through mobile phones, through social media, through GPS tracking, online harassment and also constant surveillance. Technology should never become another weapon to be used against victims.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, domestic abuse is not only a social tragedy. It can also be an economic burden. Victims lose employment. Children perform poorly at school. Health care

costs increase. Police resources are diverted and productivity declines. Therefore, protecting family is an investment in our nation's future. By broadening the legal definition of domestic abuse, Mauritius is aligning itself with the best international standards and recognising the living reality of, perhaps, thousands of victims.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the United Kingdom took a historic step with the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021 by recognising that domestic abuse includes emotional, psychological, economic as well as controlling the coercive behaviour. The UK further acknowledged the devastating impact of abuse on children who witness violence within their home. Thus, widened the scope of consideration to strengthen protection orders and support for victims.

Australia has recognised that waiting until physical violence occurs is waiting too long. It has similarly adopted a modern understanding of family violence. Across Australian jurisdiction, coercive control, financial abuse and pattern of intimidation are increasingly recognised as forms of domestic violence requiring legal intervention.

New Zealand and Canada have also modernised their legislation by recognising psychological abuse, coercive control and economic abuse while strengthening the role of protection orders and victim support.

In fact, across Europe, many countries have strengthened their domestic violence legislation in accordance with international human rights standards, recognising that abuse is a pattern of behaviour designed to dominate, isolate and control another person.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius should not stay behind, but do same and follow from successful international experiences. We are not copying other nations. We are joining a global movement that places the safety and dignity of victims above outdated perceptions of family violence. The Bill sends a powerful message that: abuse is abuse, regardless of whether it leaves visible bruises. A victim who is isolated from family and lives in fear every single day is abuse. A victim who constantly is constantly threatened and is denied access to money is also abuse. These victims deserve protection under our laws.

The Bill encourages early intervention. Every experienced police officer, magistrates and social workers know that domestic violence rarely begins with serious physical assault. Very often, it begins with insults, then intimidation, then isolation, then financial control and threats, which afterwards result in physical violence. By recognising these warning signs earlier, the law allows institutions to intervene before tragedy occurs. In many countries, this preventive approach has helped to reduce repeated abuse, and more importantly, save lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill also recognises that protection of our children is essential. A child who grows up witnessing domestic abuse carries invisible scars for life. Studies across the world consistently show that children exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk of anxiety, depression, poor educational outcomes, and perpetuating cycle of violence in adulthood. Thus, protecting a parent is about protecting a child. Protecting a family is about protecting the future of our nation.

One thing is clear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that no law, however strong, will succeed on its own. Implementation will be critical, and we are confident that our Deputy Prime Minister will put measures in place to ensure that domestic abuse will be handled effectively. Police officers must receive specialised training. Healthcare and other professionals must know how to identify victims. The judiciary must have adequate resources. Shelters and counselling services must remain accessible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, victims must have confidence that when they come forward, the State will stand beside them and will not leave them to face abuse alone. The State has every duty to protect citizens where violence, fear and coercion exist. This Bill must further be supported by continued investment in public awareness, victim services, rehabilitation programmes and coordination across government agencies.

Today, Mauritius has an opportunity to demonstrate that our legal system evolves with our society. We have an opportunity to protect the vulnerable, uphold human dignity and strengthen our justice system. Today, across Mauritius, families are asking whether women and vulnerable persons are truly safe inside their own homes. This Parliament has a responsibility to answer that question, not only with words, but with action. Every Mauritian mother and grandparent should know that the law protects them. Every child and every daughter should know that violence and abuse are never acceptable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I conclude, allow me to thank the hon. Prime Minister for prioritising this Bill, the Deputy Prime Minister for introducing this progressive piece of legislation, the AG's Office and all the stakeholders, including staff of the Ministry of Gender Equality, for their significant contribution towards modernising our legislation on domestic abuse, and all those who have spoken before me in support of this Bill.

Mauritius has long been recognised as a stable democracy governed by the rule of law. Today, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that we are also a leader through our Prime

Minister in protecting human dignity and combating gender-based violence. We fully recognise that the right to live free from violence is one of the most fundamental rights. No citizen should have to choose between personal safety and keeping a family together.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, we are protecting families. The Bill is intended to ensure that every Mauritian home becomes a place of safety rather than fear. History will remember whether we had the courage to stand on the side of those who had no voice. The laws we pass, today, will become the values we proclaim tomorrow. It will shape the lives of people we may never meet. Let today's decisions proclaim that, in Mauritius, justice begins at home. The Bill is not about politics. It is not about ideology. It is about humanity. It is about ensuring that no person should have to choose between silence and safety. The true measure of a nation is not found in the height of its buildings or size of its economy. It is found in the strength of its justice, and in the compassion it extends to those who are most vulnerable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history will recall that this Parliament did not look away when confronted with violence behind closed doors. We, in fact, opened the doors of justice. We stood with the victims. We held offenders accountable, and we affirm that every home in Mauritius should be a place of safety, dignity and respect.

As Dr. Martin Luther King once reminded the world, injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere. Today, by supporting this Bill, we affirm that there is no place in our Republic where injustice will be tolerated. Not in our streets, not in our workplace, and certainly not in our homes.

With these words, I thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. François!

(6.46 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): « Elle a été séquestrée en voiture, brutalisée, des coups sur tout son corps, frappée par son petit ami qui, par la suite, menace de se suicider – si une déclaration est faite à la police à son encontre », c'est l'histoire de Josephine et Joseph – deux jeunes. Cette histoire m’interpelle profondément, car l’abus et la violence domestique touchent notre jeunesse.

Face à la multitude d'abus domestiques, notre société est confrontée à de grands défis, tant sur le plan culturel, éducatif, légal que médiatique.

En 2025, 7562 cas de violence domestique, 986 ordonnances de protection, comme mentionné par Madame la *DPM*. À Rodrigues, les cas de violences domestiques signalés à l'Unité de protection du bien-être de la famille sont les suivants –

- en 2022 – 81 cas ;
- en 2023 – 87 cas ;
- en 2024 – 98 cas ;
- en 2025 – 107 cas pour une population de 44,000.

L'Espagne démontre une progression remarquable : le nombre de féminicides a chuté de 30 % en vingt ans depuis 2004.

M. le président, je note l'effort du ministère de l'Égalité des genres pour réduire de 24 % les cas de violences domestiques dans les prochaines cinq ans, passant de 6565 cas en 2025/2026 à 5000 cas en 2029/2023, comme objectif vers une société socialement cohésive.

Ceci dit, permettez-moi de féliciter l'honorable *Deputy Prime Minister*, Madame Navarre-Marie, pour son leadership en matière d'égalité des genres, et je remercie l'appui de l'honorable *Attorney General* pour la présentation de ce texte de loi important à la Chambre. Ce présent projet de loi est une réforme progressiste significative dans la lutte contre les abus domestiques.

M. le président, mardi dernier, c'était la Journée internationale du parlementarisme, ce qui nous rappelle que le Parlement est à son meilleur lorsqu'il protège ceux dont les voix sont souvent silencieuses. Un Parlement digne de la confiance publique ne doit pas seulement adopter des lois ; il doit veiller à ce que ces lois atteignent leurs objectifs et, dans ce cas précis, protègent la femme et la jeune fille, l'enfant qui vit dans la peur, et l'homme qui peut souffrir en silence parce que la honte l'empêche de demander de l'aide.

Ce projet de loi sur les abus domestiques est nécessaire. C'est pourquoi je salue et soutiens les définitions plus larges contenues dans ce texte de loi. Il élargit la protection,

reconnaît les schémas d'intimidation, renforce l'accès aux ordonnances de protection et envoie un message clair selon lequel les abus ne se résument pas à des violences physiques ; ils peuvent aussi être du contrôle, de la peur, des menaces, de l'humiliation, une domination économique, l'isolement, entre autres.

Et pour donner dignité aux victimes et vie à ce texte de loi, nous avons besoin de logements sûrs, des ONG, des policiers formés et de plus de ressources humaines, principalement dans les domaines de l'accompagnement social, sur le plan psychologique, de la réhabilitation, de données fiables, de confidentialité, et d'une coordination efficace entre les institutions et des initiatives spécifiques à Rodrigues reflétant notre réalité autonome.

M. le président, l'abus domestique est l'une des contradictions les plus douloureuses de notre société, surtout sur le plan économique. Le toit familial devait être le lieu le plus sûr, mais pour beaucoup de personnes, c'est l'endroit où commence la peur ou le calvaire.

L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé et les Nations Unies avertissent constamment qu'environ une femme sur trois dans le monde connaît une violence physique, psychologique ou sexuelle au cours de sa vie.

Derrière ce chiffre, il ne s'agit pas d'un nombre abstrait, mais –

- C'est Lily - une mère qui cache les blessures de ses enfants et je suis touché par le témoignage du cœur de l'honorable Leu-Govind ;
- C'est Fifi - une fille qui cesse d'aller à l'école parce que la peur l'accompagne de la maison à l'école, comme l'a justement décrit l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad ;
- Ce sont des enfants qui sont témoins de violence et qui ont besoin d'aide spécialisée, car un enfant qui grandit dans la peur, peut porter cette peur à l'âge adulte. Le Directeur de L'Audit offre des recommandations pertinentes concernant l'amélioration et la gestion des services de *shelters* ;
- C'est Mondo - un voisin qui entend crier mais ne sait pas comment intervenir ;
- C'est Marie - une victime qui peut partir mais n'a nulle part où aller en sécurité.

Les abus aujourd'hui sont les téléphones scrutés chaque nuit, les cyberviolences, l'isolement. J'ai été témoin de la souffrance d'une famille lorsque l'un de leurs fils a coupé le contact pendant trois ans par peur de représailles domestiques et aujourd'hui, cet homme est

toujours traumatisé. M. le président, une fois que nous reconnaissons l'abus, nous devons être prêts à réagir pour éviter les pièges.

Quelques mots sur Rodrigues. Une femme à Rodrigues avec des enfants sans revenu et craignant que tout le monde connaisse son histoire, demain matin, se demande où elle va ce soir sous les menaces de son persécuteur. Une victime ne doit pas avoir à répéter son traumatisme cinq fois dans cinq bureaux différents. Elle doit pouvoir entrer par une porte et trouver un chemin coordonné vers la sécurité. Je propose la création d'une nouvelle *Unité Spéciale de Soutien* dédiée à l'abus domestique, adaptée à notre taille et à nos réalités. Elle devrait rassembler des policiers formés, des travailleurs sociaux, un psychologue, un soutien juridique, des services de protection de l'enfance, des représentants de la santé et des partenaires communautaires. Cette unité devrait fonctionner selon des protocoles de confidentialité stricte, car à Rodrigues, la confidentialité n'est pas un luxe ; c'est le fondement de la confiance, car tout le monde se connaît.

Cette proximité peut aussi rendre silencieuse les victimes. Les victimes craignent souvent que la personne au comptoir de la police soit proche ou connaisse l'auteur des faits ou d'être invitées à arranger les choses. Elles peuvent craindre que leur signalement parvienne à l'agresseur avant que la protection ne les atteigne.

M. le président, c'est pourquoi la confidentialité, l'éthique professionnelle et la pratique centrée sur la victime doivent être au cœur de la mise en œuvre en lien avec l'article 4 – *Best Interest Principles*. M. le président, compte tenu du nombre de cas local, j'observe avec l'indignation le recul et l'échec politique et social devant le retard et l'absence de non-construction de nouveaux logements sociaux concrets depuis 2022 à Rodrigues. Rodrigues devrait également envisager le modèle innovant du logement « *core and cluster* » où les familles disposent d'unité d'hébergement autonome temporaire, tandis que les services de soutien sont disponibles à proximité.

M. le président, le traitement des victimes dépend non seulement de ce que dit la loi, mais de ce qui se passe au poste de police, à l'hôpital, au bureau des autorités et dans la communauté, que les premiers mots prononcés puissent soit ouvrir la porte à la protection, soit les fermer complètement. Je recommande des formations continues, obligatoires pour les agents de police, les personnels de la justice de la santé, les travailleurs sociaux et les agents communautaires. Nous avons aussi besoin de données fiables et d'un système structuré de

collecte. Rodrigues ne peut pas planifier efficacement si nous ne connaissons pas scientifiquement l'ampleur, le schéma, le lieu et la récurrence des abus domestiques.

Des données fiables permettront au gouvernement central, à l'Assemblée Régionale, à la police, aux ONG et au service de santé de passer de la réaction à la prévention. M. le président, à Rodrigues, la prévention doit parler le langage de notre société rodriguaise, respecter notre culture. La violence n'est pas une tradition. L'abus n'est pas de l'amour et le silence n'est pas la paix.

Les défis sont clairs et nous avons besoin –

- Des ressources humaines spécialisées ;
- Des services juridiques accessibles ;
- D'un centre de réhabilitation et un programme structuré de réhabilitation ;
- D'un financement durable pour des abris et un logement transitoire ;
- D'éducation et de conscientisation publique continue dans les villages ;
- D'une coopération plus consistante entre le gouvernement central, l'Assemblée Régionale, la police, le service de santé, les écoles, les religions, les ONG et les leaders communautaires.

À cet égard, je propose cinq mesures pratiques pour Rodrigues –

(i) Établir une *Specialised Domestic Abuse Response Unit* avec du personnel qualifié, formé et un soutien social ;

(ii) Créer un système de données confidentielles et de gestion de cas ;

(iii) Développer un logement d'urgence et transitoire sûr ;

(iv) Financer le soutien à la famille et les programmes de réhabilitation pour les auteurs responsables, et

(v) Renforcer une campagne de sensibilisation publique durable.

M. le président, dans son récent discours budgétaire, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, Premier ministre, a justement évoqué la reconstruction de la résilience sociale, la promotion de l'égalité des genres, le renforcement de l'autonomisation des femmes et une meilleure protection de chaque enfant contre la violence et les abus. Ce projet de loi nous donne la fondation législative et la volonté politique pour rendre cette fondation plus solide.

Je note dans le budget 2026-2027 qu'une somme de R10 millions est prévue sur le nouvel item « *Women and Children's Solidarity Programme (a)Running Expenses of Halfway Home ». I hope a few millions will go to Rodrigues as well*.

Sur la question des bourses d'études, sur la base du mérite et des critères sociaux, un traitement spécifique devrait être offert aux candidats qui attestent de leur statut de victime de violence, à condition qu'elles remplissent toutes les autres conditions prévues par la réglementation en vigueur.

M. le président, soyons clairs ; un cadre juridique moderne est important, mais une victime n'expérimente pas la justice comme un article du projet de loi.

Une victime éprouve la justice lorsque le système est fonctionnel –

- Le téléphone est répondu à temps ;
- La police réagit avec professionnalisme ;
- La cour de justice agit rapidement ;
- La confidentialité est respectée ;
- Les enfants sont protégés, et
- La communauté soutient la victime plutôt que de rester silencieuse.

Pour conclure, M. le président, je soutiens ce texte de loi car il élargit la protection contre l'abus domestique et met en lumière les souffrances cachées. Mais je dis aussi avec respect et fermeté qu'il ne faut pas s'arrêter qu'à l'adoption de la loi. Nous devons la mettre en œuvre avec urgence, avec compassion, avec des ressources et avec une collaboration renforcée avec Rodrigues. Que ce projet de loi soit une promesse à nos jeunes filles, la femme et à l'enfant qui ont peur ce soir, à la personne âgée qui se sente impuissante, à l'homme qui souffre en silence et à chaque famille de la République qui mérite la paix dans leur foyer.

Et oui, très bien, l'honorable Madame Annabelle Savabaddy, vous avez plaidé pour la paix. Construisons une nouvelle société où l'amour ne fait pas mal et qu'aucune victime ne reste seule derrière une porte fermée.

M. le président, sur ces mots, je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Narsinghen!

(6.59 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr H. Narsinghen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the floor. I just want to highlight the number of points I would have liked to raise, possibly not.

Number one, I would like to rebut some of the points raised by hon. members of the Opposition, especially the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I have to agree that two other members of the Opposition have been more or less consensual.

Number two, I just want to briefly highlight the objective of the Bill and how we are moving from a physical-centric focus to a broader approach. And also, how today, we are living in a different era and there has been evolution of society and there is a what I would qualify as being a socio-evolutionary lag and how we are shifting from a reactive law to a more proactive legislation.

Also, from a model of physical violence to focus more on economic, psychological and emotional violence and a sort of innovation with virtual harassment, protection to also related parties. More important on the innovative protection measures with an exclusion order. More coordination and also reporting duties of health professionals and other professionals, more severe punishment and also rehabilitation.

I have been listening to many of my colleagues. It is true and I fully concur that we have to crack down on domestic violence. We have shifted from violence to abuse, which is broader. But at the same time, do not forget that when we are referring to domestic violence, it is part of the puzzle. It is true that part of the Mauritian society is suffering from a more sort of ingrained illness. We have to address the issues.

Also, in spite of the fact that we have to crack down on perpetrators of domestic violence, yet the challenge – and I have to commend both the hon. Minister and the hon. Attorney General – to crack down at the same on domestic violence, but also to rehabilitate. Unfortunately, we are not spending enough time on rehabilitation, which is also very important.

So, the Bill of today is a milestone that will fundamentally reshape the social fabric of Mauritius and of society generally. For nearly three decades, our actions were governed by the Protection from Domestic Violence Act of 1997. The Leader of the Opposition stated, I

am just quoting from his speech: « *On a perdu du temps.* » Incredible! From 1997 to 2026, *on a perdu du temps*? What have they done over 10 years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

It is true. I have also listened to hon. A. Duval. They have brought a sort of amendment in 2016, which has to be commended. But at the same time, this was a patchwork. Whereas this time, the hon. Minister and the hon. Attorney General, are coming with a very comprehensive piece of legislation.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned also that *on a pas inclus des offenses comme le féminicide et aussi* marital rape. But, unfortunately, maybe he did not pay heed to the fact that it was already announced that very soon, the hon. Attorney General will come forward with legislations by amending the Criminal Code and these two offences will be taken on board. This will be a great step forward. The Leader of the Opposition also raised concerns about health professionals and other professionals flagging suspicious cases. *On ne peut pas avoir le beurre et l'argent du beurre, M. le président*.

I have also listened to the speech of hon. Dr. Aumeer. I think health professionals have a very important role to play, and it would be good that this is included in the law. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned at some stage of his speech that there is no proper coordination. But this is included in the Bill that there is a panel, which is going to be established for the first time. It is true that this was a major flaw in the law of 1997. There was no proper coordination. This time, both the technicians of the Ministry and the lawyers at the SLO, have addressed this issue. This is being cured. Now, these are the criticisms I have to level against which have been stated by the Leader of the Opposition.

But also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that we have to go back to the basic. When the Bill is being read in Parliament, we have the First Reading and the Second Reading. The purpose of the Second Reading is for the concerned Minister to listen to the criticisms of Members of Government and of backbenchers and Members of the Opposition. Backbenchers also can criticise.

There is nothing wrong in it! The hon. Minister was humble enough to say that this is a first step. A major step for a comprehensive reform, not only an amendment like they did in 2016. She is prepared to see how this legislation would be in operation. She mentioned in a speech that she will be ready in one year's time or in two years' time, possibly, in light of the practice that, if need be, there would be further amendments. We are not going to wait for

another 20 to 25 years to amend the law. This is how this Government is operating. This is how the hon. Attorney General is operating. This is how many Ministers are operating.

Well, the Leader of the Opposition also mentioned that maybe we should have more regular reports. That is a valid point. I always mention that when it comes to education, when it comes to health, and now to family protection, if we can try to pull our resources and our analysis together, both the Opposition and Government, this would be a good thing. We can fight on other matters, but on these important matters, I think if we can find a consensus, that would be commendable both to the Government and to the Opposition. This is very important.

I mentioned that two of the hon. Members of the Opposition made some very good remarks. Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger agreed that this is a good law. It is not perfect, as mentioned by the hon. Minister. Yet, it can be improved in one or two years' time. She mentioned that : « *On a donné une décoration à Madame Nathacha Appanah. Et croyez-moi, on a donné ça avec conviction, de par la grandeur de cette dame et aussi par le contenu de ses livres. Donc, ce n'est pas seulement une opération com.* »

We believe in it. This is why this law is coming at the right time. Of course, hon. A. Duval mentioned about resources. I am sure that in spite of the difficult situation that the previous government left us, the number of scandals –no need for me to mention all these scandals –, I am sure both the hon. Prime Minister, who is also the Minister of Finance, and the hon. Minister will find resources. It is true that we have to find resources and we have to find more money.

A point which I agree with hon. A. Duval is that there is a need for training. Training of the officers of the Ministry, that is point number one. But nobody mentioned – as if we are scared – I fully respect separation of powers. I fully respect that principle. But at the same time, some years back, we passed a law for the training of magistrates. You see magistrates, jurists, whether you are a barrister, you are a jurist, you are professor of law, you know the law. Some people they read around; they know much more than the law. But according to me, it is not enough.

The Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies, unfortunately, up to now, has not been involved in the training of magistrates. It is important to give a very important dimension of psychology and sociology to our magistrates and members of the judiciary. This is where at times; the hon. Minister and the officers of the Ministry of Gender and Equality are not

necessarily responsible for what is happening. We cannot poke our nose in the affairs of the judiciary. I fully concur. I fully agree. But at the same time, proper training has to be given to magistrates and even judges. Why not! This is important.

So, these are some of the some of the points which I wanted to rebut.

Now, coming to the points I wanted to raise, I mentioned that we are leaving, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what was in the actual law. Leaving a physical centric approach to a broader approach. We are taking cognizance of the evolution which has happened in our society.

While the actual Act served its purpose in a different era, it has fallen into, what I would qualify as, an undeniable socio-evolutionary lag. It remains blind, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to the realities of modern abuse, constrained by outdated physical centric focus and crippled by passive siloed administrative structures. This is where we are changing the structures.

Today, we permanently consign that obsolete framework to history and with the Domestic Abuse Bill, we are introducing a modern, highly proactive – from a reactive model to a proactive model – because it is not only physical violence which has to be taken into consideration. This is why, initially, I mentioned this is a major comprehensive framework and this legislation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is meticulously engineered to achieve two non-negotiable goals.

On one hand, providing an unyielding shield to crack down on domestic abuse through severe sentencing. We have increased the sentencing, the punishment, which is very important, but at the same time – which unfortunately we have not harped enough according to me – on rehabilitation. It is a major challenge. To punish more, but to rehabilitate is important in our modern society.

As I mentioned before in my earlier speeches, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, referring to the famous jurist Roscoe Pound, we have to strike a balance in the law and this is a major challenge. The security of women, but also the future of society. This is one point where one hon. Member of the Opposition mentioned also that we have to be careful with what we call mediation.

According to me, yes, I agree, we have to be careful with mediation. But at the same time, we have to bring a stratification, a classification among the sort of physical abuse or other sort of abuse. Because we do not want to break down families also for each and every type of violence, which I am not condoning. I am not condoning any type of violence. But at the same time, when I referred to striking a balance in society, we have to strike the balance. We cannot, for each and every even simple act of violence, emotional or psychological violence, we do not allow mediation and we allow the family to break down. Because in the medium term and the long term, what will happen? We have we will have so many broken families, and then we will have more violence in society. So, this is where I think a sort of balance has to be to be struck.

Let me be entirely clear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, domestic violence is not just about physical blows or visible bruises. Abuse is a systematic campaign of domination, isolation and control. The greatest flow of the 1997 Act was its restrictive physical centric framework, as I mentioned, which completely ignored the insidious ways abusers destroy the autonomy of the victims. This is where the Bill marks a radical shift from a violence-based model to a coercive-based protection framework. Under Section 2 of this new law, we have dramatically expanded the definition of an act of domestic abuse to fully encapsulate its modern and complex variants. Economic abuse, very important – this time we are criminalising economic abuse. It is now a crime to cause a victim, for example, to be dependent on the related person.

The Deputy Speaker: You have two minutes to conclude.

Mr Narsinghen: By isolating them from support, exploiting their resources, sabotaging employment or training opportunities, or forcing them into debt coercion. It is equally illegal to restrict access to joint digital financial platforms like debit cards and basic household necessities. No abuser will be allowed to use economic dependency to trap a victim in silence.

I already highlighted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, about psychological abuse, also virtual harassment. Also, we have enlarged the scope for related parties. Even protection will be given to grandparents. We have also beefed up the protection measures, as I mentioned – more State intervention. We have also reduced the delays which under the purview of the actual law was 14 days as mentioned by hon. Dr. Aumeer. All these improvements are being made. We are also introducing some more new protection measures and where the

magistrates and the judicial officers can use online methods to issue these orders, these protection orders, new orders. So, I mentioned also about reporting duties by professionals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a very important Bill which has been worked out in a very comprehensive manner. What is also good, the hon. Minister has mentioned and underscored that after 1 or 2 years, in light of the experience that we will be having from the operation of the law, she will be ready to have a fresh look at it. I fully agree also that training of officers is crucial. Giving more financial means to the Ministry is very important because we do not want the law just to be beautiful on paper, impressive on paper. We have to act upon it. So, this is a very good Bill.

I will not say excellent because we have to keep room for improvement. This is why I am strongly commending the Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Ms Babooram!

(7.17 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Health and Wellness (Ms A. Babooram): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is without a doubt a legislation whose time has come. For far too long, victims of domestic abuse have suffered in silence. Some have paid the ultimate price with their lives, while many others continue to bear permanent physical and psychological scars.

Our existing legislative framework, dating back to 1997, reflected the realities of its time, but society has evolved. Our understanding of abuse has deepened, and the law must evolve accordingly. This Bill represents that necessary evolution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this legislation is about far more than domestic abuse. At its heart, it is about the protection of human dignity. It is founded upon a simple but fundamental principle. No human being should ever be subjected to violence, intimidation, humiliation, or coercion, whatever form those abuses may take. One of the most significant advances contained in this Bill is the recognition of emotional and psychological abuse as offences in their own right.

For many years, countless women and indeed many men, endured profound suffering without adequate legal protection, simply because the law failed to recognise injuries that

leave no visible scars. Yet, emotional wounds can often be deeper and longer lasting than physical ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we are serious about combating domestic abuse, we must also confront its causes. Domestic abuse rarely exists in isolation. It is often part of a cycle of violence that passes from one generation to another. Many perpetrators are themselves products of environments marked by violence, neglect, and trauma. This reality does not excuse criminal conduct, nor should it ever diminish personal accountability. But if our objective is to build a safer society, we must also address the conditions that allow violence to reproduce itself.

It is precisely for that reason that I warmly welcome the rehabilitation programme introduced by this Bill. A mature justice system is one that punishes wrongdoing while also creating opportunities for genuine rehabilitation. We owe that not only to offenders who are willing to reform, but also to future victims whose suffering may be prevented if destructive behavioural patterns are broken. Rehabilitation is, therefore, not an act of leniency. It is an investment in public safety and in the long-term well-being of our society.

Rebuilding society cannot occur without re-education. Harmful cycles must be broken and individuals must be encouraged to believe that they can rebuild their life through genuine reform.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, domestic abuse also presents complex human realities that cannot simply be reduced to legal principles. Relationships are built upon affection, emotional attachment and shared responsibilities. Victims often remain with their abusers for reasons that may appear difficult to understand from the outside: children, financial dependency, emotional attachment, fear, hope for change, and family pressures all play a role. I am certainly not suggesting that anyone should remain in an abusive relationship. Every victim deserves protection and the opportunity to live free from violence, but unless we understand the realities that influence those decisions, we risk oversimplifying a problem that is profoundly complex. How many parents still encourage their daughters to remain in abusive households for the sake of their children? How often do victims suppress their suffering because they fear the judgment of others? The familiar expression ‘*dimounn ki pou dir*’, continues to weigh heavily upon far too many lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on another note, I also warmly welcome the inclusion of economic abuse within the scope of this legislation. Economic control is one of the most effective instruments through which an abuser exercises power over a victim. Some women are prevented from pursuing employment because an excessively possessive partner refuses to allow them any independence or cannot tolerate the idea of them interacting with male colleagues. Others earn an income, yet are deprived of any meaningful control over their finances. They are made to bear all the household expenses, while the man spends his money on everything else. She has no savings; she bears her pain in silence and keeps being beaten and criticised. She will not go back to her maternal home, either because she does not want to become a burden or she cannot buy or rent a house because she has no money.

The truth is bitter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no money often means death. The uncomfortable truth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that financial dependence can become a trap from which courage alone cannot provide an escape. Some victims may seek refuge in shelters; others may not consider that option suitable or available. It is therefore encouraging that the hon. Minister, Shakeel Mohamed, has assured this House a few weeks ago, that victims of domestic abuse will receive special consideration in matters relating to housing. That commitment deserves recognition because financial independence and secure housing are often the first steps towards freedom.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant aborder un autre phénomène de notre société moderne qui mérite toute notre attention. Il fut un temps où les rumeurs se propageaient de voisin à voisin, puis, elles se transmettaient au téléphone. Aujourd'hui, elles se diffusent instantanément sur les réseaux sociaux, amplifiées devant des milliers d'inconnus. Nous voyons de plus en plus de personnes publier des vidéos ou porter publiquement des accusations contre leurs conjoints, anciens ou actuels, dans le seul but de les humilier aux yeux de tous. De tels agissements causent un préjudice psychologiquement considérable, non seulement aux victimes, mais également à leurs enfants et à leurs proches.

L'état de droit existe précisément parce que les sociétés civilisées ont rejeté la justice rendue par l'opinion publique. Pourtant, les réseaux sociaux ont, à bien des égards, recréé un environnement où certains se considèrent comme enquêteurs, procureurs, juges et bourreaux. Derrière l'anonymat de faux profils, des individus alimentent des campagnes de harcèlement à coup d'insultes, de moqueries et de commentaires incessants, sans mesurer les conséquences parfois dévastatrices de leurs paroles. Ils jettent la pierre en toute impunité, tandis que les victimes et leurs familles continuent de souffrir. Je salue donc les dispositions

de ce projet de loi qui érige en infraction l'utilisation des moyens de communication électroniques et des plateformes numériques pour faire du chantage, harceler, menacer ou intimider une victime, notamment par la diffusion de contenu offensant ou à caractère intime.

Cela étant dit, M. le président, je suis d'avis que notre arsenal juridique doit continuer à évoluer. Nous devons également nous interroger sur la responsabilité de ceux qui participent sciemment au harcèlement en ligne par des commentaires malveillants et préjudiciables. Notre Constitution garantit à juste titre les droits et libertés fondamentaux, mais tout droit s'accompagne nécessairement de responsabilités. La liberté d'expression n'a jamais eu vocation à devenir un permis de porter atteinte à l'intégrité psychologique d'autrui.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another important improvement introduced by this Bill is the expansion of those who may be held accountable for domestic abuse. Too often, perpetrators escape legal consequences simply because they no longer live under the same roof as their victims, or because their relationship did not fall within the restrictive legal definition. Abuse does not cease merely because two individuals no longer share the same address. Violence, intimidation, and coercion frequently continue long after relationships have ended. I therefore commend the broader definition adopted by this Bill, which better reflects the realities experienced by victims.

I also wish to highlight another important aspect of this legislation. A child who commits an act of violence against his or her parent will now fall within the ambit of this law. It adds to the legal provisions of the existing Protection of Elderly Persons Act. This is particularly significant in protecting our elderly citizens who deserve to live in dignity, safety, and peace. We know that substance abuse and illicit drug dependency can sometimes fuel violence within families, with elderly parents becoming the first victims of those seeking money to sustain their addiction. This Bill sends a clear message that abuse is unacceptable, regardless of who the perpetrator may be. Whether the aggressor is a spouse, a former partner, or even an adult child, every victim deserves the protection of the law. Our elderly parents who devoted their lives to raising us should never have to spend their final years living in fear within their own homes.

In closing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to commend the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare for introducing this timely and progressive piece of legislation. I give this Bill my unequivocal support. I look forward to

have more lives saved, more families rescued, and a stronger social fabric for a better and healthier Mauritius.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member. Hon. Pentiah!

Mr Pentiah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 10 July at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned!

(7.31 p.m.)

MATTERS RAISED

PIG BREEDING – RODRIGUES-MAURITIUS – EXPORTS FACILITIES

Mr J. F. François (Second Member for Rodrigues): Merci, M. le président. Mon *adjournment matter* est adressé à l'honorable ministre de l'Agro-industrie, le Dr. Boolell.

Je me fais la voix des éleveurs de porcs de Rodrigues pour demander de faciliter l'exportation des cochons sur patte jusqu'à que la chaîne porcine de l'abattoir de Baie Diamant soit équipée pour permettre l'abattage de porc selon les normes établies par les différentes législations en vigueur à Maurice. Cela va permettre la transformation et l'exportation des carcasses sur le marché mauricien et régional.

Il y avait un surplus de plus d'environ 3 000 têtes de porc en début d'année. Pour les éleveurs de Rodrigues, ce sont des pertes économiques décourageantes avec des coûts exorbitants pour les aliments. On ne peut pas laisser mourir ce secteur économique vital pour Rodrigues.

Je demanderai à Monsieur le ministre s'il peut intervenir, rapidement, auprès de toutes les autorités concernées, nationales et locales, pour trouver les solutions nécessaires pour soulager nos éleveurs de porcs de Rodrigues. C'est urgent.

Je vous remercie.

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Dr. A. Boolell): Thank you very much. I do understand the urgency of the matter, but my good friend would realise that there is no live movement of pigs between Rodrigues and Mauritius, and we have put a lot of premiums on the autonomy of Rodrigues. We will look at this issue as a very comprehensive matter. I cannot, at this stage, create unnecessary expectation, but you can rest assured it will be addressed. We need to collaborate and see how best we can improve the livelihood of pig breeders.

Mr François: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

(7.32 p.m.)

NATIONAL CANCER CENTRE – FLUOROURACIL 5% – SHORTAGE

Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Je vous remercie. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de la Santé. Des mandants de la circonscription m'ont signalé que depuis un mois, le médicament Fluorouracil 5%, prescrit dans le cadre de chimiothérapie, n'est plus disponible au National Cancer Centre.

Je lui demanderai, donc, de bien vouloir faire de sorte qu'il soit disponible ou alors de communiquer quand ce sera possible qu'il soit disponible ou alors de bien vouloir donner des alternatives pour ne pas compromettre le traitement des patients.

Je vous remercie.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware of this problem. There is a shortage on the market also. I will try to do the needful as early as possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baboolall!

(7.33 p.m.)

CAMP MARCELIN, FLACQ – CREMATORIUM CONSTRUCTION – HEALTH HAZARDS

Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government. Hon. Minister, there is a public outcry from the inhabitants of Camp Marcelin in relation to the construction of a regional crematorium. They have already served a *mise en demeure* to the District Council of Flacq. They fear that this will cause serious health hazards as it is less than 150 metres from their houses.

Can the hon. Minister find out if all the permits have been obtained, and if an Environmental Impact Assessment has been done in relation to the risks to their health?

Thank you.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr R. Woochit): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take note of this request. I can table the answer later on.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

At 7.34 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 10 July 2026 at 3.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POLICE CONSTABLE/WOMAN POLICE CONSTABLE – VACANCIES & RECRUITMENT

(No. B/965) 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 grade of Police

Officer, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information, as to, since January 2025 to date, the number of –

(a) existing vacancies therein;

(b) new recruits therein, and

(c) officers therein having left within six months of respective appointment.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 January 2025 to 03 July 2026, there are 558 funded and 2,619 unfunded vacancies in the grades of Police Constable/Woman Police Constable. Funds have not been requested for the filling of the 2,619 vacancies at this stage as the training capacity of new recruits is around 600. The vacancies will be advertised gradually and funds will be requested accordingly.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that, following the last recruitment exercise conducted in May 2025, 412 new recruits were selected to join the Mauritius Police Force, comprising 289 Temporary Police Constables and 123 Temporary Woman Police Constables. Out of these, four Temporary Police Constables and four Temporary Woman Police Constables desisted prior to their appointment.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that 40 Temporary Police Constables and 4 Temporary Woman Police Constables left within six months of their appointment. The training of 3 Temporary Police Constables was also terminated due to breach of terms and conditions of appointment and training.

I wish to inform the House that the Disciplined Forces Service Commission has advertised the recruitment for the post of Police Constable/Woman Police Constable on 23 June 2026 and the closing date for the submission of applications is 13 July 2026. This current recruitment exercise is being conducted under a revised Scheme of Service, with a view to attracting a larger pool of qualified candidates to join the Mauritius Police Force. This initiative, will contribute to progressively filling existing vacancies and strengthening the operational capacity of the Force.

GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY – MAURITIUS TURF CLUB – CAMERAS PURCHASE EXPENSES

(No. B/966) 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

Gambling Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to whether it has recently incurred expenses for the purchase of cameras for the Mauritius Turf Club and, if so, indicate the –

(a) cost thereof, and

(b) reasons and justifications therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that it has not incurred any expenses for the purchase of cameras for the MTC Jockey Club.

I am further informed that the MTC Jockey Club requested the Gambling Regulatory Authority on 15 April 2025 to purchase a Horse Racing Video System for an estimated value of Rs60 million to be used in the stipe room during horse race meetings.

The MTC Jockey Club made that request to the Gambling Regulatory Authority due to the extensive damages of its existing video camera infrastructure rendering it inoperative, namely –

(i) cables were cut at end points and some of the cables were missing;

(ii) connectors at end points were removed, and

(iii) the existing infrastructure was outdated due to the use of analogue system instead of digital technology.

The existing Horse Racing Video System infrastructure, which was set up by previous Horse Racing Organisers, was not properly maintained by People's Turf PLC and Côte d'Or International Racecourse and Entertainment Complex Ltd.

The Gambling Regulatory Authority Act stipulates that the Horse Racing Organiser (MTCJC) should provide for proper infrastructure, including interview rooms, facilities for viewing of race videos and other ancillary infrastructure to assist the stipendiary stewards in their duties.

The request of the MTC Jockey Club was lengthily discussed at the Gambling Regulatory Board meeting of 21 May 2025. I am informed that the Gambling Regulatory Board did not retain the proposal of the MTC Jockey Club for the latter to set up the Horse Racing Video System.

Instead, with a view to preserving the integrity of the horse racing and in the decision-making process of stipendiary stewards, given that the stipe room and the stipendiary stewards, are under the control and under the ambit of the Authority, the Board decided to carry out a cost benefit analysis –

(i) either for the acquisition of a Horse Racing Video System through a tendering process, or

(ii) explore the possibility for the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation to assist in setting up a Horse Racing Video System in the stipe room as the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation is responsible for the broadcast of horse racing events to the Mauritian public.

After reviewing the cost benefit analysis, the Board found that contracting out the production of images to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation was the most cost-effective and reliable option.

Accordingly, since the start of the horse racing in August 2025, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation is ensuring the production of images by providing the following –

(i) 9 HD production cameras;

(ii) two outside broadcast vehicles;

(iii) production and technical crew, including producers, cameramen, sound technicians, and production assistants, and

(iv) news editor/commentator for an on-air analysis and real time announcement.

As per the agreement with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, the Gambling Regulatory Authority is paying the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation an amount of Rs350,000 for Saturday race meeting and Rs550,000 for Sunday race meeting. In addition, as from July 2026, a monthly rental fee of Rs700,000 is being paid to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for stipes room equipment.

The House would wish to note that in the Annex to the Budget Speech 2026/2027, it is mentioned that a new Horse Racing Fund under the Gambling Regulatory Authority is being set up for the payment by MTC Jockey Club of –

(i) laboratory services for the testing of blood, urine and other samples;

(ii) expenditure related to the recording of horse race images locally;

(iii) insurance cover for local apprentice jockey, and

(iv) development of horse racing.

The Fund will be financed through weekly fee to be remitted by the MTC Jockey Club for the right to disseminate race images abroad and commission from bookmakers.

The payment, which will be effected by the MTC Jockey Club, will also cover for the expenses incurred by the Gambling Regulatory Authority from the start of the racing season

2025, including the costs which have already been paid to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation from the start of the racing season 2025.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – SAFE CITY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM CAMERAS – DETAILS

(No. B/967) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) 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 Safe City Surveillance System Cameras, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof installed in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes, indicating –

(a) the locations thereof, and

(b) whether an assessment has been carried out to identify additional areas requiring surveillance coverage and, if so, indicate whether due consideration will be given thereto.

(Withdrawn)

TERRE ROUGE – RS114 MILLION SEIZURE – INQUIRY UPDATE

(No. B/968) 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 inquiry initiated into the suitcases containing Rs 114 million seized at Terre Rouge in February 2025, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Crimes Commission, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER POST – TERMS & CONDITIONS – EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

(No. B/969) 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 post of Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Board, he will, for the benefit of the House –

(a) obtain information as to the terms and conditions of appointment of the current incumbent thereof, if any, indicating the full remuneration package, including basic salary and other entitlements in terms of allowances, gratuity, car and passage benefits, bonuses, medical cover, pension or any other benefits, and

(b) table copy of the contracts of employment of the last two incumbents thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MR S. K. – DEATH INQUIRY – OVERSEAS EXPERT HOMICIDE DETECTIVES

(No. B/970) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) 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 inquiry undertaken into the death of the late Mr S. K. by the expert homicide detectives from overseas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the fees, if any, paid thereto.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/78 of 04 March 2025 on the same subject matter.

As the House is aware, the Judicial Enquiry instituted to further investigate into the death of late Mr S.K. in October 2020, was highly critical of the way the Police had conducted the inquiry into the case. The Judicial Enquiry had also concluded the death to be a homicide and not a suicide.

In view of the disturbing circumstances surrounding the death of late Mr S.K., Government commissioned the services of a team of foreign investigators from the United Kingdom to review the inquiry carried out by the Police into the unexplained death of Mr S.K. as well as other unresolved cases.

Since last year, the investigation team from the United Kingdom is in Mauritius, and is working together with the police and the Financial Crimes Commission on several unresolved cases, including the case of late Mr. S.K.

After an initial review, the investigators have confirmed that the death of Mr S.K. was a murder case.

Notwithstanding the fact that evidences have been destroyed during previous enquiries, the Police, with the assistance of the foreign expert team, is still investigating into this case.

The fee payable to the team of experts from the United Kingdom for the investigation of the unresolved cases including the unexplained death of Mr S.K. is £52,000 monthly.

FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION – INQUIRIES INITIATED – NOVEMBER 2024-JULY 2026

(No. B/971) 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 Financial Crimes Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of inquiries the Commission has initiated since November 2024 to date, indicating the number thereof completed and referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice and/or for decision to prosecute and the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MR N. P. – STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES – POSITION & REMUNERATION DETAILS

(No. B/972) 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 Mr N. P., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the positions currently held by the latter in State-owned enterprises, including in sub-committees thereof, if any, indicating in each case, details of the remuneration entitlements in respect thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MR A. C. P. & TWIN BROTHER – ARREST REASONS & SANCTIONS

(No. B/973) 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 Mr A. C. P. arrested on or about 03 April 2026 and the subsequent arrest of his twin brother, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

(a) the reasons therefor and circumstances thereof, indicating the items seized in the course thereof and whether same include illicit drugs and, if so, give details thereof, and

(b) whether they are currently subjected to objections to departure.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – KROLL REPORT COPY – TABLING

(No. B/974) 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 Kroll Report on Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the tabling of copy thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIAN PASSPORT – DETECTED/REPORTED FAKE CASES (2021-2026)

(No. B/975) Mr R. Beechook (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 the Mauritian passport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the number of detected or reported cases of fake ones in Mauritius and abroad, respectively, over the past five years, indicating in each case, the nationality of the holder thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUANS – SUBSIDY ON AIRFARE SCHEME – PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/976) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth 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 subsidy on air tickets provided for Rodriguans, he will state whether consideration will be given for the reinstatement thereof.

Reply: The Rodrigues Special Holiday Package Scheme was introduced on 01 August 2009 as a temporary stimulus measure to boost the tourism sector in Rodrigues by encouraging Mauritians to visit the island.

On 15 February 2015, the Subsidy on Airfare Scheme for passenger travelling from Rodrigues to Mauritius was introduced to promote greater mobility for Rodriguans to travel to Mauritius. This measure also ensures parity in ticket pricing by aligning the airfare from

Rodrigues with the discounted fares available to Mauritian residents under the Rodrigues Special Holiday Package Scheme.

Under both of these schemes, Mauritians and Rodriguans passengers benefitted from a fixed subsidy of Rs1,856 during the peak season and Rs2,456 during the off-peak season on their air tickets.

The subsidy is jointly financed by the Government and Air Mauritius Ltd, with the Government bearing two-thirds and Air Mauritius Ltd bearing the remaining one-third of the subsidy amount.

From February 2015 to May 2026, approximately Rs1 billion has been disbursed by Government in airfare subsidies, benefitting around 950,000 passengers under the two schemes.

I wish to point out that the Special Rodrigues Holiday Package was introduced to provide an impetus to the tourism sector and has played a significant role in placing the sector on a sound footing. This is evidenced by the increase in tourist arrivals from 55,000 in 2007 to 141,600 in 2024, representing a rise of 157%. The measure has therefore largely achieved its objectives of stimulating travel and significantly supporting the development of the tourism sector in Rodrigues.

In line with Government's policy of fiscal sustainability and fiscal consolidation, it was announced in the Financial Year of 2025/2026 that the subsidy on air tickets would be progressively phased out over a period of two years.

Accordingly, an initial reduction of 33% in the subsidy was implemented with effect from 01 July 2025. As a result, the revised amounts of subsidy were Rs1,445 during the peak season and Rs1,845 during the off-peak season.

As from 01 July 2026, a further reduction of 34% has been applied, and the subsidy amounts to Rs723 during the peak season and Rs923 during the off-peak season.

In view of the prevailing fiscal constraints and the limited fiscal space, Government is not considering the reinstatement of the full subsidy on air tickets for the time being.

It is worth noting that, instead of providing subsidy on airfare, Government will invest an amount of Rs9.2 billion in the new runway project at Plaine Corail, including an

investment of Rs470 million over four years as direct support to the tourism sector. Small businesses will benefit from grants and support for green certification, while tourism infrastructure will also be upgraded.

In the context of responsible fiscal stewardship, it was announced in the Budget Speech for the Financial Year 2026/2027 that a High-Level Committee would be established under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance to undertake a comprehensive review of the tax system with a view to enhancing its fairness, efficiency and international competitiveness.

In this context, Government is giving serious consideration to reviewing all subsidies that may have outlived their original purpose. Accordingly, the Special Rodrigues Holiday Package Scheme and the Airfare Subsidy for Rodriguans will be assessed as part of this review.

POLICE OFFICERS – DRUG TRAFFICKING – ARRESTED/SUSPENDED – (2014-JULY 2026)

(No. B/977) 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 drug trafficking offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers arrested and/or suspended in connection therewith since 2014 to date, indicating the number thereof convicted and where matters stand regarding the remaining cases.

(Withdrawn)

VILLAGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS – ALLOCATED BUDGET – LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

(No. B/988) Mr C. Baboolall (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the forthcoming Village Council Elections, he will –

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –
    (i) where matters stand regarding the preparations therefor, and
    (ii) the budget allocated for the voter registration exercise, and

(b) state whether legislative amendments are being envisaged in relation thereto.

Reply (The Prime Minister): With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to section 10A(1) of the Local Government Act, which provides that the life of the entire Village Councils, shall, unless sooner dissolved, be of a duration of six years as from polling day of the previous village council elections and shall then stand dissolved. Writs shall be issued within 60 days of the date of any dissolution of the village councils.

Given that the last Village Council Elections were held on 22 November 2020, the entire Village Councils will, unless sooner dissolved, stand dissolved on 21 November 2026.

The registration of electors is held every year and during that exercise, the Office of the Electoral Commissioner also compiles a register of electors for every local government area. I am informed by the Office of the Electoral Commissioner that the registration of electors for this year has already been completed in May. The registers compiled will come into force on 16 August 2026 and will remain in force until 15 August 2027.

Last year, in the context of the municipal elections, the Representation of the People Act was amended to make provision for the compilation of a supplementary register of electors following the issue of writs to allow the registration of voters whose names did not appear on the electoral register and prevent disenfranchisement. Similar arrangements will be made for the forthcoming Village Council Elections once the writs have been issued.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, an amount of Rs30 million was spent in the financial year 2025/2026 for the registration of electors. Funds to the tune of Rs285 million have been earmarked in the current financial year for the holding of Village Council Elections.

In reply to part (b) of the question, I wish to highlight that since last year, Government has embarked on a process to devise a thorough reform of the entire local government system, to ensure that it reflects present realities and enables Local Authorities to respond more effectively to citizens' expectations and the needs of local communities. For that purpose, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was set up on 13 December 2024 under the chair of the Minister of Local Government to spearhead the reform agenda. The Inter-Ministerial Committee has so far held seven meetings and is working on proposals in consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the reform framework is inclusive, coherent and aligned with national priorities.

This reform will entail legislative amendments aimed at modernising governance and administration systems, clarifying roles and responsibilities and promoting a performance-driven, innovative and participatory approach. I am informed that the Minister of Local Government will introduce a revamped Local Government Bill into the National Assembly by October 2026 and the Village Council Elections are expected to be held in accordance with the provisions of the new legislation.

NOSH DEPARTMENT, ACCIDENT UNIT — ACCIDENT CASES & INVESTIGATION PROCESS

(No. B/1002) Mr N. Beejan (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in regard to the Accident Unit of the National Occupational Safety and Health Department, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

(a) monthly number of occupational accident cases reported thereto since January 2026 to date and table the details and outcomes thereof, and

(b) number of officers responsible to investigate same and conduct site visits/record statements, indicating the prescribed timeframe, if any, for the carrying out of the investigation and conclusion of cases and whether delays have occurred therein and, if so, why.

(Withdrawn)

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY BOARD – SECURITY SERVICES – SERVICE PROVIDERS

(No. B/1003) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether in regard to Security Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the company/companies to which the provision thereof have been awarded since 2015 to date.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 11 – SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECT – HOUSING UNITS ALLOCATION

(No. B/1004) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing

needs of the inhabitants of Constituency No. 11, Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, he will state –

(a) the measures taken and/or being envisaged to meet same following delays in the completion of the Ballison Rose Belle Social Housing Project, and

(b) whether consideration will be given for the allocation of existing social housing units, already completed in neighbouring localities, to eligible beneficiaries of the said Constituency.

(Withdrawn)

CENTRAL WATER AUTHORITY – ILLEGAL WATER CONNECTIONS – FINES COLLECTED

(**No. B/1005) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to illegal water connections, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, since January 2025 to date, information as to the number of cases thereof detected, indicating the –

(a) nature of the actions taken against the offenders, and

(b) total amount of fines collected in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES – INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION & FLOOD MITIGATING FUNDS – APPROVED QUANTUM

(No. B/1006) Mr J. Edouard (Fourth Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed infrastructure rehabilitation and flood mitigating funds announced by Government following the recent severe floods in Rodrigues, he will state the quantum thereof approved, indicating the –

(a) reasons for the delay in the disbursement thereof to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and

(b) revised timeframe for the release thereof to allow urgent road and drain repairs.

Reply (The Prime Minister): Following the flooding of March 2026, a delegation headed by the Minister of National Infrastructure proceeded to Rodrigues on 21 March 2026 to assess *de visu* the extent of the damage caused and to identify the appropriate remedial measures.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of National Infrastructure that, with a view to mitigating future flood risks in Rodrigues, three drainage projects, with a total project value of approximately Rs174 million, are currently being implemented under the "Climate and Sustainability Fund – Construction and Upgrading of Drainage Infrastructure".

Accordingly, a provision of Rs82 million has been earmarked for the financial year 2026-2027 for implementation by the National Development Unit of the following three projects –

(a) Drainworks at Quatre Vents–Dans Darisse, at an estimated cost of Rs41 million;
(b) Raising of the radiers at Baie Topaze and construction of a box culvert upstream, at an estimated cost of Rs24 million, and
(c) Raising of the radiers at Pistache, at an estimated cost of Rs17 million.

All three projects are expected to be completed by 09 November 2026.

I am also informed that the National Development Unit will implement another project for raising the *radiers* at Baie du Nord and Rivière Cocos for flood mitigation at these two regions. The estimated cost of the two projects is Rs189.42 million, and an amount of Rs20.45 million has been provided in the 2026-2027 Budget of the National Development Unit. The tender documents are under preparation and the project is scheduled to start this financial year.

I am informed by the Ministry of National Infrastructure that there has been no undue delay in the implementation of the approved projects following the flooding of March 2026. The Ministry has acted promptly by undertaking an on-site assessment, identifying priority interventions and ensuring the necessary budgetary provisions in the financial year 2026/2027. The approved projects identified following the Ministerial visit are at the design stage. As the projects are being implemented by the National Development Unit, there will be no disbursement to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Funding under the Climate and Sustainability Fund is administered by the Ministry of Finance and is released in accordance with established budgetary and project implementation procedures, upon requests submitted by the National Development Unit.

CAMP FOUQUEREAUX FOOTBALL GROUND – PITCH RECONSTRUCTION – FLOODLIGHT INSTALLATION

(No. B/1007) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the Camp Fouquereaux Football Ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the urgent remedial measures being envisaged for the –

(a) reconstruction of the dilapidated synthetic pitch and provision for the future maintenance thereof, and

(b) installation of a new floodlighting system at the adjacent playground, indicating in each case the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

COURTS OF MAURITIUS – INTERPRETATION SERVICES – MAURITIAN SIGN LANGUAGE & FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

(No. B/1008) Ms S. Anquetil (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the provision of interpretation services in the Courts of Mauritius for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons and for litigants and witnesses unable to communicate in English or French, he will state the measures taken and/or being envisaged by his Office, in collaboration with the Judiciary, for the expansion of the pool of certified Mauritian Sign Language and foreign language interpreters with a view to ensuring effective and equitable access to justice.

(Withdrawn)

FLIC EN FLAC – ELDERLY HOME CONSTRUCTION – FUNDS & IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1009) Mr S. Jugurnauth (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the plot of land situated at Flic en Flac vested in his Ministry in 2022, he will state whether funds have been earmarked in the 2026-2027 Budget for the infrastructural development thereof and, if so, indicate whether consultations will be held with the relevant stakeholders in relation thereto.

Reply: At the very outset, I wish to clarify that the plot of land situated at Flic en Flac, referred to in the question, was vested in my Ministry with effect from 27 April 2018 for the construction of a home for the elderly.

I wish to inform that funds have not been provided for this project in my Ministry's budget for Financial Year 2026/2027. Instead, the project has been placed under the Public Sector Investment Programme as a Project Under Preparation.

The project is presently at design stage at the level of the Ministry of National Infrastructure. Financial clearance will accordingly be sought once the design and bidding documents are finalised.

As part of a democratic Government, my Ministry will be engaging with all relevant stakeholders for the conceptualisation and implementation of this project.

ROUTE 251 – IRREGULAR BUS SERVICE COMPLAINTS – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1010) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the irregular bus service along Route 251, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Land Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand regarding complaints received in respect of non-adherence to timetable by bus operators thereat, indicating the remedial measures being taken or envisaged in relation thereto.

Reply: Route 251, extending from Arsenal to Cité Vallijee via Calebasses, Terre Rouge, SSR Street and La Butte, is presently served by four individually owned buses operating under the Bus Owners Co-operative Society, Port Louis, and two buses operated by United Bus Service Ltd. The approved schedule provides for services at intervals of approximately 20 minutes during peak hours and between 30 and 45 minutes during off-peak hours.

Persistent complaints have been received regarding irregularities in the service, particularly the non-adherence to the approved timetable. This situation is mainly attributable to the following –

(i) one individual bus has remained off the road since August 2025, and

(ii) two individual operators have persistently failed to comply with the approved timetable.

The operation of buses along this route is also significantly affected by heavy traffic congestion in Port Louis throughout the day. This has an adverse impact on the ability of operators to maintain the approved timetable with the limited number of buses operating.

A meaningful improvement in the service would be achieved only with additional capacity. The NLTA will shortly invite applications for Route 251.

In the meantime, pursuant to the powers vested in him, under section 77D of the Road Traffic Act, the Minister directed the NLTA to redeploy two buses of an existing licensee for a period of six months to operate on Route 251.

Taking in consideration that Route 251 is presently a very uneconomic route, the NLTA has also been requested to explore avenue to improve the viability of the route and, consequently, increase patronage. This includes the extension of Route 251 up to SSRN Hospital and Mahogany Shopping Mall.

As regards the individual operator whose bus has remained off the road since August 2025, that is, for almost one year, the NLTA has been instructed to take, on a fast-track basis, such disciplinary action as may be warranted under the relevant legislation, including consideration of the revocation of the licence held by the operator.

The Ministry will continue to monitor the situation on Route 251 and pursue the necessary measures to ensure that commuters are provided with a reliable and adequate public transport service.

CWA – LA NICOLIERE RESERVOIR – STORAGE CAPACITY EXPANSION – AUTORISATION DELAY

(No. B/1011) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed increase in the storage capacity of La Nicolière Reservoir, he will state why the Central Water Authority has not yet been granted authorisation to proceed therewith, indicating the timeframe, if any, set for a decision to be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

ONLINE PLATFORM FOR THE CONTROL OF DANGEROUS DRUGS – STAFF MONITORING – INTER-INSTITUTIONS ACCESS

(No. B/1012) Mr T. Apollon (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Online Platform for the Control of Dangerous Drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether –

(a) dedicated staff monitors same, and

(b) the Pharmaceutical Services Division, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (Customs Anti-Narcotics Section) and the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit currently access same and, if not, why not.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Online Platform for the Control of Dangerous Drugs was developed by my Ministry in collaboration with the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) pursuant to Recommendation 10.3.15 of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking (2018), which called for the establishment of a centralised real-time electronic monitoring system for dangerous drugs and precursors.

The platform was officially launched in March 2022 and became operational in the private sector on 01 June 2022. This online system constitutes a major breakthrough in strengthening the regulatory framework governing dangerous drugs by providing a comprehensive electronic system for the recording, monitoring and tracking of transactions involving dangerous drugs and precursors throughout the entire supply chain.

The platform is currently being used by all authorised stakeholders dealing with dangerous drugs listed under Schedules II, III and IV of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000, including importers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, pharmacies, private clinics and hospitals. At present, there are 244 registered stakeholders on the platform.

A key feature of the system is its integration with the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs clearance process. Once a Customs declaration relating to controlled drugs is duly cleared, the import information is automatically transmitted to the platform in real time, and the corresponding stock inventory of the importer, manufacturer or distributor is updated without any manual intervention. Thereafter, all authorised stakeholders are required to continuously record subsequent transactions, including sales, transfers, manufacturing, re-manufacturing, exports, disposals and any other movement of controlled substances. This enables real-time inventory management, enhances regulatory oversight and significantly reduces the risk of diversion of dangerous drugs into illicit channels.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Pharmaceutical Services Division, through the Pharmacy Board, is responsible for the administration, regulatory oversight and monitoring of the platform. Officers of the Division monitor the information submitted by authorised users and ensure compliance with the requirements governing the movement of dangerous drugs.

Following discussions held in October 2023, it was proposed that officers of the Central Supplies Division and Hospital Pharmacists be trained on the functionalities of the platform. However, implementation of this proposal could not proceed pending the roll-out of the e-Health system in Regional Hospitals.

Since April 2024, no further communication was held between the Customs Unit and the Pharmacy Board regarding the operational enhancement of the platform. Consequently, following the restructuring of the Pharmacy Board, my Ministry convened a meeting on 24 March 2026 with representatives of the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the National Agency for Drug Control to review the current status of the platform and determine the way forward. A further meeting, under the chairmanship of the Ag. Director-General of Health Services, will shortly be held to finalise the implementation roadmap.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the Pharmaceutical Services Division has oversight of the platform. However, direct access has not yet been extended to the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs Anti-Narcotics Section and the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit.

This is because the Ministry is currently migrating the Online Platform for the Control of Dangerous Drugs from the Mauritius Revenue Authority e-services infrastructure to the Government digital platform. This migration is intended to ensure greater sustainability, enhanced governance, improved cybersecurity and full ownership of the application by Government.

Upon completion of the migration and after Ministry officers have been fully trained and accustomed to the upgraded platform, appropriate access rights will be granted to the Mauritius Revenue Authority Customs Anti-Narcotics Section and the Mauritius Police Force, including the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, in accordance with Sections 4A and 24 of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000.

This will facilitate enhanced inter-agency collaboration, improve intelligence sharing, strengthen regulatory oversight and support the timely detection and prevention of the diversion and illicit trafficking of dangerous drugs.

The Ministry remains committed to continuously strengthening the governance and digital monitoring of dangerous drugs through close collaboration with all enforcement and regulatory agencies so as to safeguard public health and reinforce the national fight against drug trafficking.

M4 MOTORWAY PROJECT (FORBACH-AIRPORT) – PROCUREMENT METHOD & LOCAL CONTRACTORS/SME'S PARTICIPATION

(No. B/1013) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure whether, in regard to the proposed M4 Motorway Project linking Forbach to the Airport, as announced in the Budget Speech, he will

state whether local and international bids will be called for, indicating whether, in the event the contract is awarded to foreign contractors, provisions will be made for –

(a) the participation of local contractors/subcontractors, including Small and Medium Enterprises, and

(b) local stakeholders to benefit from the economic opportunities, employment creation and transfer of expertise in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

MR S.K. – MANAGEMENT COMPANY – LICENCE/COMPLAINTS & SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

(No. B/1014) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning whether, in regard to Mr S.K., she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the position held by the latter in any management company licensed to operate in Mauritius, indicating –

(a) whether it is in presence of any complaint in respect thereof and the action, if any, taken, and

(b) the measures envisaged to safeguard the reputation and integrity of Mauritius as an international financial centre having regard to the forthcoming ESAAMLG mutual evaluation following the arrest thereof in Dubai.

Reply: I am informed by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) that Mr S.K. is one of the directors and beneficial owner (70%) of Aurevya Wealth Ltd (AWL), formerly known as Capital Horizons Ltd, which holds a Management Licence from the FSC since 15 January 2013.

I am further informed that Mr S.K is also borne on FSC records as director for six Global Business Companies under the management of AWL.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the FSC has not received any complaint in relation to the matter.

FSC has informed that an investigation into the business activities of Capital Horizons LTD, now known as AWL, was initiated in July 2021, following a complaint concerning Global Business Companies under management of AWL. The investigation concluded that there was no evidence of any breaches committed by AWL, and the matter was accordingly closed in January 2022.

I am further informed that following the alleged arrest of Mr S.K. on 26 June 2026 at Dubai airport as reported by local press and online media, the FSC requested for a compliance report duly signed by the directors of AWL on 30 June 2026.

AWL submitted the compliance report on 02 July 2026 which *inter-alia* reported the following –

(a) Mr S. K's arrest and detention on 26 June 2026 was confirmed by AWL;
(b) there is no entity under the administration of AWL that is associated with the purported allegations reported in press articles;
(c) AWL is not associated with or implicated in the allegations reported in the press, and
(d) AWL will continue to monitor developments and will promptly notify the FSC of any material information or subsequent developments.

With regard to part (b) of the question, with a view to safeguarding the reputation and integrity of Mauritius as an International Financial Centre in view of the forthcoming ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation, the following are in place –

(i) Mauritius has a robust AML/CFT regulatory framework with recent updates to various pieces of legislations through the Anti-Money Laundering, Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Countering Proliferation Financing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2026;
(ii) as part of its risk-based supervisory approach, the FSC will consider any similar case as high risk and appropriate resources will be allocated to monitor its progress;
(iii) under section 20 of the Financial Services Act (FSA), provision has been made to the effect that –

"Where, at any time, the Commission is not satisfied that a controller or beneficial owner of a licensee is a fit and proper person, it may, after giving the person and the licensee an opportunity to make representations about the matter, direct –

(a) such person to dispose of his shareholding in the licensee;
(b) such person not to exercise any voting rights with respect to his shareholding in the licensee;
(c) or the licensee to take such remedial measures as may be necessary in the circumstances."

Therefore, in the event Mr S. K's fit and proper' status is deemed impeded, the FSC will exercise its legal powers under Section 20 of the FSA and initiate enforcement actions as it deems appropriate.

Furthermore, pursuant to section 24(7) of the FSA, where, at any time, the FSC is not satisfied that an officer of a licensee is a fit and proper person, it may direct the licensee to remove such officer.

PLEASURE CRAFT LICENCES – APPLICATIONS & ISSUANCE

(No. B/1015) Mr K. Rookny (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to applications for the issue of Pleasure Craft Licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Authority, information as to whether consideration will be given for same to be entertained all the year throughout and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

METRO EXPRESS SERVICE – EXTENSION – SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO SOUTH

(No. B/1016) Mr M. Seeburn (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd., information as to whether consideration is being given for the extension thereof to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and to the southern region of the island.

(Withdrawn)